THE CHEZZLES

LUCY GIBBONS MORSE

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THE CHEZZLES

A STORY

BY

LUCY GIBBONS MORSE

Illustrated

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TO MY CHILDREN.

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I.

THE REASONS WHY CHALLEY AND BOB CHEZZLE HAD TO STAY IN NIPSIT ALL SUMMER, WITH NOBODY TO TAKE CARE OF THEM BUT CAPTAIN PEPPER.

MRS. CHEZZLE was staring at vacancy. She was in a car, on her way home after a long shopping expedition with her two little boys, Challey and Bob, as every one called them, although their names were really Charles Templeton Penroy Chezzle and Robert Huntingdon Chezzle, as anybody could prove by looking in the inside of a copy of "Franklin's Arithmetic" belonging to the former, and one of "Swinton's Second Reader" belonging to the latter.

The Chezzles lived so far out on Tremont Street that people had not stopped calling it Roxbury.

It was the seventh day of June, and very warm. Everybody was hot except Mrs. Chez-

zle, and she would have been if she had had time to think of the weather. There were ten people on the side of the car where Bob and his mother sat, and only nine on Challey's side. Bob had counted them several times, and he did not see why a very stout lady who got in at Waltham Street chose to sit down next to him, when there was more room on the other side. He wished people would n't be so fat, anyhow; and as soon as he could squeeze himself from behind the lady's elbow he slid down, and took a seat opposite, by Challey.

"Don't you wish we were in Nipsit this very minute, Challey?" he asked, taking off his hat and fanning himself with it because that was what his brother was doing.

"Yes," said Challey, "only I 'd like to go with mamma first, in the 'Veal dy Hovver' to-morrow, would n't you? I mean, to go only just over to Europe and straight back again to Captain Pepper's, because — I wish mamma would n't stare so! Everybody 's looking at her." And Challey tried to reach across the car to touch his mother, but the conductor got in his way.

He need not have cared, for she was a most pleasant little lady to look at, with her fair, pure forehead, her cheeks reddened both by the heat and her busy thoughts, and her

smooth, dark hair drawn loosely back over her ears, showing the natural curves in which it grew and a pretty way of its own of kinking a trifle upon one side of the parting and drooping a little on the other. Her bonnet and dress, simple enough to escape notice, betrayed a person of exquisite neatness and refined taste. She was only a little over thirty, and, staring into vacancy with her great blue eyes, she looked wonderfully like Challey and quite as innocent.

There was never a more unconscious stare on the face of anybody. She had been examining a handful of papers with memoranda upon them, and was trying to think of something she had forgotten. The conductor moved along, and Challey was just going to touch her when the item she wanted flashed into her memory.

"Glassman!" she cried out, aloud, glaring into the face of an opposite passenger, and making him jump as she dropped hands and papers suddenly upon her knees. She was irresistibly unconscious. Everybody laughed. They were in such a quiet street and her voice had rung out so clearly that the word and action had not been lost by anybody, except the fat lady, who awakened, with a start, from a

comfortable doze, and, with a sudden fear lest she had passed her destination, hitched herself about to discover where she was and what the people were laughing at. Her eye caught nothing unusual but Challey, who was bursting with indignation, and had doubled up his fists at everybody.

"Never mind, sonny," she said, leaning forward to pat his shoulder good-naturedly. "Let 'em laugh at you; what 's the harm?"

Bob could not hold in another second, and sniggered outright.

"Never mind!" the fat lady said again.

But Challey did mind very much. He said nothing, however, for he succeeded at last in touching his mother and motioning to the conductor to stop the car and let them out.

"Go in the house quickly, Challey dear," his mother said, when they reached the sidewalk. "You are overheated and must not be in the sun. I have an errand to do a little way down this street; tell papa I shall be at home in a few minutes to help with the packing." Mrs. Chezzle turned the corner and disappeared while the little boys rang the front-door bell.

"*I* could n't help it, Challey," Bob was saying when Molly Dolan opened the door;

"first mamma staring her eyes most out, and then you slamming your hat on this way," — Bob imitated the act perfectly, — "and then that awful fat lady waking up, and all the people laughing! A fellow can't help laughing when everybody 's funny all at the same time, can he?"

"Sure now an' who 'd be wantin' 'em to? And with all that 's goin' on in the house this day it 's a bit of a laugh now an' thin 'll be useful an' hilp along the worrick," said Molly, who was a neat, blooming Irish girl with very red eyes, which belied her cheerful words.

After a general tour of inspection the boys submitted to having their best clothes exchanged for every-day ones, and retired to the back yard in search of amusement.

Challey would be nine years old early in August, and Bob was but just seven. Molly had lived with the Chezzles since Challey was a baby, and her eyes were red because she was to be separated from her "two byes" for the first time. She was a sunny-hearted girl, however; and if she took advantage of the opportunity to have a cry while her mistress was out, or if she shed a few tears in the retirement of the china-closet, she made it a point to be cheerful in the presence of any of the family.

"Bein' as it 's me juty," she explained to her younger sister Katy, who had come for the day to help, "to kape up ther spirits a bit be— befar they 'll be scat— scattered" — she had to recover her breath before she sobbed out in spasmodic jerks — "scattered to the far winds. Oh, what 'll I do! But it 's you, Katy, that knows the whilst I 'm gay an' lively me heart is jist breakin' into — into twinty smahl paces — it is that — but," with tears rolling down her cheeks, "I 'm cheerful an' as gay as — as the tay-kittle. It 's not mesilf 'll be putting annything extra into the prassent emargency!"

It was certainly an emergency. There had never been one like it in the Chezzle family. Here was the little house to be rented furnished, all but the large third-story back room, which Mr. Chezzle was to occupy himself, as his business would keep him in town all summer. The little boys were to be sent to Nipsit coast to board with Captain Zenas Pepper, and Mrs. Chezzle was to sail for France in the "Ville de Havre" on the very next day.

Bob said it was like fire-crackers going off to decide so many things all at once, and both children enjoyed the excitement hugely.

"It feels like a birthday," Challey said, "as

if something was going to happen all the time, and it 's almost as much fun as moving."

The cause of the excitement was the arrival, a few days before, of two letters from France for Mrs. Chezzle. One was from a lawyer, and read as follows : —

PARIS, *May* 25.

MME. ELLEN PENROY CHEZZLE.

DEAR MADAME, — At the request of my client, Mr. Thomas Penroy, your brother, I write to convey to you the painful intelligence that, according to the report of his physicians, he is ill beyond all hope of recovery. He is anxious to provide for his young daughter, and looks to you and your husband as the only relatives in any way able to assume the care of her. He therefore begs that you will, if it be in your power to do so, come to him without delay and prepared to take the child back with you to America immediately upon the event of his death. If you are unable to come yourself, Mr. Penroy wishes to send his daughter to you under my own personal protection. He earnestly begs that you will cable your reply to his entreaty as soon as possible.

In further accordance with his wishes I enclose a check, which he hopes will be sufficient to defray the expenses of your journey, in case

you decide to come, and he expresses the hope of being able also to pay for the cost of your passage home. With respect, I am, Madame,

Your obedient servant,

JEAN AUGUSTE DUVERGNE.

The other letter was from Meaux, in the suburbs of Paris, and was evidently written with great difficulty, in a round, struggling, childish hand. It read : —

MA TANTE HÉLÈNE, — Papa will to go to Heffen in pont vun mont or leetl days. Papa say I mus yu to luf à cause he yu luf ven you leetl chile i yu luf eaf yu haf ze chin not poke out like to M. le docteur fraidikeu an eaf yu hav not les yeux si petit votre nièce

MARIA ANTOINETTE PENROY.

i haf no personnes i luf exceptè mon papa. J'aime toujours mon papa.

Mrs. Chezzle had read the letters until she knew them by heart, and had cried over them, especially over the one written by her little niece. She had heard nothing of her brother for many years, and had not seen him since she was too young to remember what he looked like.

Of course it was decided at once that she

would obey his summons, and that she would bring Maria home with her.

"Since your features are all right, Nelly dear, I think we are safe on that score," her husband had said, smiling. "There 'll be only the consideration of one more child to provide for, and we must manage that somehow. I judge from the lawyer's letter that if Mr. Penroy succeeds in scraping together enough to pay her passage, it will be all he can do. As to *your* passage, my dear, I prefer to pay that myself, if I have to sell something to make it possible. I hope I shall be able to write to you to return his check, or to reserve it for his little girl's benefit."

"But, John," his wife replied, "as I am going for *his* sake, I don't see why you should not let him pay my way, if he can. Certainly you ought not to afford it, and, if he is dying, poor fellow, and you are going to support Maria, — I feel sure she is a dear little thing, and that she is simply pining for some woman to love, — you can see by her letter that she does not care now for a soul except her father. I don't believe I was ever so glad before that my eyes are big" —

"And your chin," interrupted her husband, taking hold of it and stooping to kiss her,

"although a fair, decided chin, with a dimple into the bargain, does n't 'poke out' a hair's breadth too far. Well!" he added, roughing up his hair: "There is not much time given us to speculate in, and we 'll hope for the best. Whatever your brother is, he calls for our sympathy. And the wealth of the Indies could not supply him with such comfort for his last days as the 'Ville de Havre' will take to him in the form of his little sister, Ellen Chezzle. So now, to business. In the first place, we 'll decide to let that Mr. Macksby who wants the house have it for the summer. That will enable us to send the boys to Captain Pepper, and — let us begin to make out the inventory."

So it was all arranged, and it was no wonder that Molly Dolan thought the family was to be scattered to the "far winds." Challey and Bob were the only ones who enjoyed the situation, but their happiness was a blessing to the household. Of course they got into everybody's way occasionally, but their small legs saved a great many steps for others by the eagerness with which they ran on errands in every direction, and the sense of importance they acquired was fairly earned.

They were entitled to the happiness as well.

Their school-fellows had voted the day before, at recess, that the Chezzle boys were "in for the best fun a fellow could possibly have." The boys had been telling one another where they were to spend the summer, and Challey had excited universal envy by making the following announcement: "*We* are going to Nipsit in Cape Cod to stay all alone with Captain Pepper, and he 's a real sea-captain and he 's been the top-captain of lots of whaling-vessels and has caught heaps of whales and been around the world often and often and he knows everything!"

Challey, stopping for breath, Bob struck in: "And he lives all alone and he can keep house and cook just as well as my mother and sew on buttons and take care of sick folks and build a ship and a steamboat all by himself!" The boys in Bob's class believed every word, but Challey's class contained members who doubted the last statement. However, that was unimportant; the main facts were delightful, and a general sentiment prevailed to the effect that the joys of Newport, Narraganset, Lenox, Long Branch — even Europe, were mild in contrast with the fun of living all alone with a real sea-captain. "Won't it be grand, Bob, to have nobody to take care of us except good old

Captain Pepper?" said Challey in the back yard where they were sharpening their jack-knives on two bricks.

"Yes," said Bob. "Don't you pity Fred and Mora Wellington because they 've got to go to their place at Newport?"

"Of course," said Challey, "I pity 'em like thunder. Mora told me all about it. They never go barefooted, and they have to ride everywhere in carriages and play tennis and sit at the dinner-table forever! Bob, you must rub your thumb up and down the blade — so — to see if it 's sharp enough."

"Mine is n't sharp yet," said Bob, following Challey's directions. "This is the way papa sharpens his razors, Challey," he added, going to work again in a frightful manner with his knife. Presently he said, "But they *do* have live ponies of their very own, Challey! and there 's lots of fun in the stables, and then there 's ice-cream for dessert!"

"Pooh!" exclaimed Challey, contemptuously, snapping his knife shut and putting it into his pocket. "What 's all that to digging clams and helping Cap'm Pepper wash out his sail-boat?"

"And scup! and puff-pigs!" cried Bob. "*I* think just puff-pigs are better than ponies,

if you have to be fashionable! Is your knife done? I can rub my thumb up and down the blade of mine as hard as anything, and it don't cut yet."

"I 'm going to finish mine at Nipsit, on Cap'm Pepper's grindstone," said Challey. "Come, let 's pack; papa said we might put just what we liked in one box."

"Hurrah!" shouted Bob, springing up. "Then I 'll take my brick, *sure!*"

The Chezzles had been six successive summers to Nipsit, on the Massachusetts coast, five miles from any railroad. They knew nearly everybody in the village, and could not have found a better place in which to leave their little boys. Captain Zenas Pepper was a man of about sixty, and had lived alone since the death of his wife, eight years back. He had been devotedly attached to her, and showed his reverence and tenderness for her memory in a simple way, which some people thought ridiculous, but which he continued to pursue with unaltered regularity. He refused all offers from relatives who wished to help him, would have nobody to live with him, and carried on the little affairs of his house in the precise routine which his wife, Luella, had established.

He liked nothing better than to talk about

her, and it was easy to draw him out on the subject. Mrs. Chezzle went to Nipsit the day after she received these foreign letters on purpose to make an arrangement with him concerning her two boys. They already looked upon him as an intimate and confidential friend, and he had often jokingly proposed to them to come and live with him. To have such a plan considered seriously took him by surprise, and at first he did not know what to say. "But there was Mrs. Chezzle, as neat and quiet as if she had just stepped out of a Quaker Meetin'-house;" he explained to Mrs. Tuckit, his opposite neighbor. "Of course, I was n't goin' to let her put up anywhere but to my house for a tiffin, an' I was cookin' it. I never see anybody look trigger, nor move about quieter. She found out where the dishes belong while my back was turned, and she set the table for us two as easy as if she was in her own house. And the most wonderful part of it was her bringin' a lunch-basket all the way from Boston, with a roast chicken in it, on account of takin' me by surprise! I never seen any one like her. Then she told me all about her brother dyin' in foreign parts, and — what else could I do, Mrs. Tuckit? An' *she* can't do different. She an' her husband can't hand over those two little

chaps to anybody that might chance to come along — of course not! So we settled it all while we were washin' the dishes. She 's as deft a body at that as ever I see in my life. Not a single dish did she set down with a bang, and the most she hed to ask was a pleasant-spoken: 'Uncle Zenas, shall I hang the towel here?'

"So it 's settled, and that Molly of theirs is to come down if either of the boys is taken sick, and, with you to mend 'em up, I don't see but what we 'll get along somehow."

To Mrs. Chezzle he had explained his habits without reserve, had shown her all over the house with great satisfaction, and, as proof positive that he knew how to take all necessary personal care of her children, had pulled open a bureau drawer while he was saying: "I 've done up my own things ever since Luella died, and I 'd like to see anybody wash and iron a b'iled shirt better than I can. Look for yourself, Mrs. Chezzle, and, if there 's more than a fly-speck left on them shirts an' dickies, I 'd like to know it."

Once started, the captain liked to go through a list of his regular occupations, so he went on: "My wife Luella used to sweep the fo'castle — that 's up-stairs — every Wednesday

two weeks, and the hulk an' lockers every Friday. She did the scrubbin' an' polishin' o' the decks on Saturdays, an' she hauled over the riggin' most any time. Ever since she died, I 've followed in her wake, an' no livin' creetur, man or woman, ain't goin' to do it for me in this house — not till I 'm ready to heave-to an' go to the cemet'ry. An' there 's a good deal o' wear in me yet. I like her mem'ry better than other folks's company. Is there any harm in that, Mrs. Chezzle? But your children are different. They 'll be mates and 'll take orders. And she was very fond of children, was Luella!" And the captain went to the window to see which way the wind was, as an excuse to hide a mist that had suddenly dimmed his eyes.

Thus, while on the evening of June 8th Mr. Chezzle was putting his third-story back room to rights, — a difficult task because so many things had been put there for storage, — and while Mrs. Chezzle, down in the harbor, was lying in her berth on the steamer, tired out and very homesick, Challey and Bob were sitting in Captain Pepper's kitchen, down at Nipsit, feeling as if life there would be nicer of mornings, may be, than after dark, and wishing that mamma was there to put them to bed just that

once. They were plucky little fellows, though, and would not, for worlds, own up to each other how they felt.

Challey ran his fingers through his hair, in imitation of a familiar gesture of his father's, to see if that would encourage him, but it did not seem to. He thought it would, if his hair were not so short.

Bob squeezed his handkerchief into a tight wad, and rubbed his nose upwards until it was as red as a cherry, remarking: "My nose tickles, Challey, and that 's what makes water come into my eyes!"

It was not long, however, before the captain came, and, sitting down in his great leathern arm-chair, lifted Bob upon one knee and Challey upon the other, saying cheerfully: "Now, messmates, this is our first night together, and I 'm going to draw up a compact; do you know what that is, Bob?"

"A compack? Is it a kind of a trunk?" asked Bob.

"Pass it! Do you know, Challey?" he asked while Challey was saying eagerly: "*I* know: it 's a little thing to tell which is North, and it 's to steer a vessel with!"

"No, that 's a compass," said the captain. "Yet you 're about right, too, for my compact

is to steer with, an' no mistake. Do either of ye know what a promise is?"

"Ye-e-es!" cried both boys together, and Bob added: "It 's saying you 'll do something sure-*pop!*"

"Well," said Captain Pepper, "a compact is just as many promises as there are people. Now we are three people, so there 'll be three promises. You have heard me talk about my wife Luella; most as much, I reckon, as I 've heard you talk about your mother. My compact is this: that you are to promise to do things about the house just the way Luella would like 'em done; and I am to promise to do everything I can for you just the way your mother 'd like. That 'll be fair an' square. So, to begin with, we 'll get you to bed, and if you 'll work hard at rememberin', I 'll work hard at puzzlin' out your mother's way of doin' it, from the takin' off of these here jackets, clean down to sayin' the prayers what she 's taught ye."

"Oh, what a splendid compack!" cried Challey. And Bob held the captain's hand tight, as they climbed the stairs, declaring that it was the best pack he ever heard of in his life.

II.

HOW CHALLEY AND BOB DECIDED TO CATCH A WHALE, AND HOW THEY WERE SURE THAT AN INDIAN WAS GOING TO SCALP THEM.

THE responsibility which Captain Pepper had taken upon himself was the talk of Nipsit. The old ladies, especially those who had made him offers of help, were put out about it. At one of the weekly sewing-circles, Mrs. Ann Haxter said it was the "biggest mistake he'd ever made yet, and she hoped he'd live to see it." Aunt Phœbe Miller said boys were well enough where they belonged, but Zenas Pepper's house was not the place for them. Mrs. Shubael Simmaker took off her spectacles to say, solemnly: "Wait till the summer 's over — that 's all *I* ask!" But Miss Sophia Wringer had the most to say, and felt a grievance into the bargain. "He 's had offers and offers, from the best and most re-

spectable ladies, to look after his house," she said. "Even *I* have offered! But no — not a person will he have sleep under his roof, because he's laid out to keep things just as Luella used to, and a body can't so much as hang a bonnet up for fear of putting it on the wrong peg. And now" — she paused to include the whole company in the glare of her spectacles before she said — "*boys!*" as if she was pronouncing the name of a tribe of savages. "What would Luella have said to *boys?*"

Miss Wringer took up her work again and sewed with such energy that she jerked her body with every stitch.

"If he's *sot*, he's *sot*. But he's gone back on his word, as you say, Miss Wringer," said Mrs. Haxter.

"Sot?" cried Miss Wringer. "He's shifty-minded!" and she was so angry that she broke her thread. Then she added: "Wait till the boys catch the measles, — that's all!" And that suggestion seemed to comfort the ladies greatly, for there was in it a fair prospect that Captain Pepper would be punished for his imprudence before the summer was over. The mention of "whooping-cough!" in a cheerful tone, came from one person, "nettle-rash!"

from another, and a long list of possible ills followed, from one or other of the company, until the tone of conversation became quite happy.

Captain Pepper heard a good deal of this, in one form or another, but was not disturbed. His busy, cheery neighbor, Mrs. Tuckit, who had a troop of children of her own, gratified him by saying:

"With the fancy for young folks that you have, Uncle Zenas, you 'll find out all you need to, most likely, as you go along; but if you come to anything you don't understand, and want help, just send for me. Let them come over of a Sunday morning to get their neckties put on, and I 'll see that they 're all right for meeting."

The boys had not been with the good captain twenty-four hours, however, before he encountered some difficulties for which he was not prepared. He found it next to impossible, at first, to keep up a knowledge of their whereabouts. They would be in a dozen different places in the course of half an hour, and sometimes it seemed to him as if they were in all of them at once.

After a week of surveying the neighborhood in this manner, they took to going nearly every

day to a place which was known as "Gull Marsh," about half a mile beyond the last cottage along the shore, where the sea flowed over some flats and formed itself into most entertaining little bays and creeks. Here they sailed their boats, built dams and bridges, and had a world of pleasure. They found more arrow-heads there than anywhere else, too, and, what with stories of the early settlement of the country with which their heads were full, and the sight of an occasional mild, modern Indian taking a short cut through the woods in that direction by what was called "The Indians' Path," and which led to the Reservation a few miles away, the place worked upon their imaginations, and they were fully persuaded that, if Captain Pepper would only let them explore a little beyond it, they would discover wigwams and wild savages, without a doubt.

Where was the use of his telling them about the Reservation when Challey had read Higginson's "Young Folks' History" and Scudder's "United States"? and then, did not papa tell them Indian stories every night when they were in Boston? No; the captain's authority on this subject was insufficient altogether. They decided that his "explorings" were all

carried on by sea, and that it was more than ought to be expected of him that he should know everything about the Indians.

"Discóveries on land are always made by such folks as Christopher Columbus, Bob," Challey explained. "But it would n't be polite to tell Cap'm Pepper that *we* know more than he does about Indians. And then he 'd be worried about our playing at the marsh, if he knew there was a tribe so near it; and there is n't a bit of danger, because we can hide as soon as we hear a war-whoop!"

None of these fears troubled the captain, and, in his ignorance of the savage tribes with which the imagination of the boys had peopled the neighborhood of Gull Marsh, he considered it a safe place for them to play in, and was so well satisfied at knowing where to look for them, that he made no complaint because they were very late to dinner, and waited patiently for his meal until they got hungry enough to come home.

His forbearance was rewarded, however, one day when they were unusually late, by Challey, with a piece of potato on his fork, halfway to his mouth, suddenly asking: "Cap'm Pepper, did you get so hungry as we are, waiting for your dinner?"

The captain seized the opportunity, put on a most doleful expression, declared that he had been "as hungry as a wracked sailor," and drew such a pitiful picture of his starving condition that Challey and Bob both declared they would never be late again. But the captain was so overcome with remorse at sight of their penitence, that he came very near spoiling their good resolutions by calling himself a heartless sea-monster, and promising to make Bob a new boat immediately after dinner. He fulfilled the promise admirably, and went further, for he made two boats instead of one, and so filled the little hearts with gratitude that they took great pains the next day to listen to the noon bell when it was rung in the village, and after that they were tolerably prompt at dinner.

In the afternoons they were more with the captain, "helping" him clean his boat, the Luella, taking a sail in it with him, fishing for scup, working in the shed where the carpenter's bench and tools were, digging clams, or doing something equally pleasant. They followed the captain like little dogs, and had so many questions to ask, and so much to tell, that it would have gone hard with him if he had not let much of their talk go into one ear and out of the other. They had, among

other things, a great deal to say about a whale which they had seen, and indignantly scorned Captain Pepper's remark that it must have been a dog-fish, or a floating cask, and although he explained to them how, sometimes, the dog-fish follow the menhaden into shallow water, and how, if they are not meddled with, they are harmless and soon disappear, the boys were persistent in maintaining that they had seen a veritable whale.

"It's a *very dangerous* whale, too," the captain heard Bob say, "and we 're building a trap to catch him." He took little note of their talk; none the less Challey gave him a full account of the construction of the trap, and he might have learned a great deal if he had only listened.

He did go so far as to ask them how many whales the trap was intended to catch, and to inquire occasionally whether they had yet captured any. But they soon detected the light manner with which he regarded their serious enterprise, and were a little injured by it. They brought him round by remarking that they "guessed he 'd believe it when they told him some day that it was *caught*, and he could have it to sell for a whole lot of money!" After that he teased them no more, but confined his

remarks on the subject to speculations as to what he was going to buy with the enormous sum he expected to realize from whales.

One day he took a party of city boarders out sailing, and, as he expected to be away longer than usual, arranged with the boys that they were to go nowhere except to the marsh to play, and to Mrs. Tuckit's, where they were invited to have tea. They were delighted with the prospect of a visit to the Tuckit children, and took two tin pails to Gull Marsh with them, intending to fill them with raspberries for Elva Tuckit, a demure, housewifely little girl of thirteen, who was a great favorite and caretaker among children generally.

The whale-trap consisted of two stakes on each side of a narrow creek separating two bits of the marsh which were on a higher level than the rest, and connecting the main water with a sort of inner bay which was only filled at high tide. The stakes were driven just near enough together to hold three planks, one above another, across the creek. Challey and Bob could never have driven in the stakes, or dragged the planks from an old, disused pier close at hand, if it had not been for the help of Alex Tuckit, who was a strong, overgrown boy of about eleven, and Crissy

Jones, a tough little fellow of the same age as Challey.

Their idea was, that, when the whale came into shoal water, which he could only do at high tide, he must swim through the creek into the inner bay, and then they would put the planks up between the stakes, the tide would go out, and there the whale would be, high and dry, on the marsh, all ready for Captain Pepper!

So, every day when it was possible they went to examine the trap at high tide to see whether the whale had done what was expected of him. To-day the tide was rising, but Challey said it was not high enough yet for whales, and proposed that they should gather berries while they were waiting. They wandered along a grassy road which led westward through a wilderness of woods and underbrush, filling their pails slowly because of the butterflies, bugs, caterpillars, birds'-nests, and wild flowers which attracted their attention.

"It 'd be easy enough to pick a million quarts," Bob said, "if it was n't for the" —

"The what?" asked Challey, turning to see why Bob stopped suddenly.

A low, strange cry sounded from a little distance.

Bob went and stood by Challey. Looking up to him with startled eyes, he whispered: "It 's Indians! Don't you wish we had our bows and arrows?"

"Yes — hark!" said Challey, putting his arm over Bob's shoulders and drawing him closer.

Another wail sounded, louder than the last — long and strangely piteous.

"We can't fight Indians with tin pails!" whispered Bob.

"No," said Challey; "and we have n't got anything to t-trade with, either! D-d-don't be f-f-frightened, Bob! We 'll promise him our" —

Another cry! Wilder, and broken, like no sound the children had ever heard. Bob said softly: "We have n't our bows and arrows, Challey, so we *can't* kill him, and *I* say, let 's hide!"

Bob had never before been afraid of anything. His suggestion was a good one, and in an instant they were both flat down in the underbrush.

Challey was pale with fright, but he was not a coward. He put himself in front of Bob, and, turning his head, said in a whisper:

"Bob — I suppose he 'll scalp both of us; but I 'm the biggest, and he 's got to do me first!"

"No, he shan't, Challey!" said Bob, stoutly. "If he finds us, I 'm going to jump on his back and squeeze my arms tight around his head so he can't see, and — Ya-ah!" he screamed, for another cry interrupted him — a hopeless, helpless cry this time, but unmistakably from a child, and accompanied by the sound of feet crackling through the bushes.

"He 's scalping some child now, Bob!" cried Challey, in a ghastly whisper; "we *must* fight him. Ho-o-oh!" he yelled with all his might, and scrambled upon his feet, Bob following suit, of course.

They gave one mighty yell together, and, standing shoulder to shoulder, glared into the woods whence the sounds came.

Crackle, crackle, came the tread of feet, and just ahead of them, down the path, the bushes parted — two small, white hands pushed through the leaves and made an opening for a little girl not more than five years old, hatless, with brown hair all tangled, tears streaming down her cheeks, and sobbing out the pitiful, strange cries the boys had heard. There was no Indian, no other person. With a shout of relief both boys stepped out of the underbrush into the road, and Challey called to the little girl:

"Hallo! are you lost?"

Drawing in her breath, the child prepared to wail once more, when her eye lighted upon the children. She gave a cry, sudden and piercing, ran to Challey, and throwing her arms around him, looked, her face all alive with joy now, first at him and then at Bob.

"What 's the matter?" asked Challey.

"What did you make such queer noises for?" asked Bob. "*Did* you see an Indian?"

The little one let go of Challey, put her finger on her mouth, and shook her head.

"I 'm glad you did n't," said Challey. "But you made such a noise, we thought you were being scalped. Where do you live? How did you get lost?"

The little girl took no notice of him. She was watching Bob eat raspberries out of his pail.

"Come on; let 's go back to the marsh. Do you want to see our whale-trap?" asked Challey.

Still she took no notice of him, but leaned forward, touched Bob to make him look at her, curled her left arm around an imaginary pail, pretended to eat berries from it, and then stretched her hand out for some.

"Here!" said Challey, putting his pail into her hands, "you can have mine; but I don't see why you don't speak."

She clasped the pail in one hand and kissed the other to him several times before she began eating the berries, which she did eagerly, and not stopping until they were all gone, when she turned the pail upside down to show that it was empty, returned it to Challey, and kissed her hand to him again.

He rather sheepishly kissed his hand to her in return. She was certainly the strangest little girl they had ever seen.

"Why don't she talk?" asked Bob.

"Maybe she 's French!" said Challey, and, struck by the idea, he said:

"Polly-voo Frongsay?" But she took no notice. She only reached to take hold of his hand, closing her little fingers tight over it, as if she did not mean to let go.

"Let me try," said Bob, and, planting himself before her, he bent his face to the level of hers, and shouted:

"Pol-le-e-e voo Fr-rong-sa-ay?"

All she did was to smile, pat her mouth several times, and shake her head.

"She is n't French," said Challey.

"It 's lucky she is n't," said Bob, "because

that 's all the French we know, Challey, except 'Donny-moy doo burr seel voo play,' and she has n't got any butter to ask for, and nobody 'd want to say that out in the woods, anyhow;" and Bob said he "gave up."

Challey had one more thought, but he was too polite to mention it. He had often heard people say of himself and Bob, when they were bashful and silent, "He must have lost his tongue." And now it occurred to him that perhaps such a calamity did really afflict the human race sometimes, and that perhaps the little girl had lost hers. At any rate, she was holding fast to his hand in a very pretty way, stroking it, and laying her cheek against it, and there was a vague something about her which made her seem very helpless and roused his compassion. So he answered the pressure of her hands, and said to Bob:

"Well, anyhow, she does n't *want* to talk, or she can't, and she likes us, so we 'll take care of her. Come on!" and he led the way to the marsh.

"That 's so," said Bob. "I guess she 's some language we don't know."

So they went back to the shore, gathering berries occasionally and offering them to her, and by the time they reached their whale-trap,

they had learned, as children do, to adapt themselves to her. She would not speak a word, but her eyes — they were the very brightest, loveliest eyes Challey thought he had ever seen — her eyes caught every motion. And it was impossible not to notice how she used her hands and arms. She waved one about continually, in an infinite variety of gestures. Sometimes she let go of Challey's hand to wave both, now slowly, now very rapidly, or again held for an instant in some significant pose.

"It looks as if she was dancing with her arms, instead of her feet," Bob said. Once in a while the boys understood her: as whenever they offered her anything, or when Challey helped her over a fence or wet places. Then she invariably kissed her hand.

"So," Challey said: "she 's polite, even if she does n't speak, for she *means* 'thank you.'"

The shadows were long by the time they reached the shore, the sun was low and shone on the sails of a dozen fishing-boats coming home on the same tack.

Standing with their backs to the sun, the water looked silvery to the children, and the scene before them was like a vision. But they did not think of it; they only watched a flock

of gulls rising from the marsh. At least the little girl did, for the boys were watching her while she spread out her arms as far as they could reach on each side, and moved them slowly up and down with wonderful grace.

"She means their wings," said Bob; and he and Challey smiled at each other, for she was more beautiful than the birds when she did that.

Slowly, more slowly, her dreamy eyes following the birds, she moved her arms until, holding them straight up, as high as she could reach, they were quite still for a few seconds, — all but her hands, which waved upward once and rested, pointing to the sky.

"Yes," said Challey, delighted; "she means they are out of sight, and she thinks they have gone into the sky!"

The boys did not care for the gulls, but they could not help watching the little girl. She trod lightly here and there, her face, so innocent and pure, turning which way the birds appeared; and the boys could tell by her motions when the birds came, how they flew in long curves, and disappeared, or came again.

By and by she pointed to the water, where she spied something moving. "Oh! oh! oh! It 's the whale!" screamed Bob, the quickest to see; and sure enough, there was a great fin

sticking out of the water and moving in rapid sweeps, leaving a long wake behind.

In a second Bob was standing, knee-deep, by the stakes, grasping the end of a plank.

"Now, if it only swims through!" he cried. But the creature had no such intention.

There was a most determined, sturdy look about Bob's legs while he struggled and waded, straddled and tugged at his plank.

Challey was at the other end of it, and they would certainly have waited much longer, in the hope that the fish would reappear, if they had been alone.

But the little girl beckoned to them, and they had to join her because of that irresistible something which made them wish to do whatever she wanted of them.

So they led her home to Mrs. Tuckit's, and begged that she, too, might stay to tea.

"Deary me!" cried Mrs. Tuckit, putting her baby down to catch the little girl up in her arms. "It 's 'Lisha Barnes's poor little torshent! Run, Alex, and tell her mother she 's all safe! Uncle Zenas's boys have found her and brought her home! There 's been such a scare about her, — poor, blesséd lamb!"

How could Captain Pepper know that the boys' story about the whale had anything in it,

when they insisted at night, while he was putting them to bed, that they had found a little girl in the woods whom the Indians were going to scalp?

"At any rate," Challey said, "she could n't talk, and I do believe" — he drew near to Captain Pepper to say in a low, awe-stricken tone, "I do believe she has really lost her tongue, and I thought maybe the Indians" —

But the captain roared, and cried: "Bless your heart, no! Why, that was Shirley Barnes's little sister. She 's got the doom o' silence on her."

"Mrs. Tuckit called her something like a torch," said Challey, who was very much puzzled.

"Torshent,[1] child," said the captain; "don't you know what that is? Why, it 's the youngest of the family. Benjamin, in the Bible, was his father's torshent, and Bob there is your father's torshent, and the little Barnes girl is her father's; every one in Nipsit calls her little Torsh Barnes."

"Did you say she had on a *dume*, Captain Pepper?" asked Challey. "She had n't any hat on; what is a dume?"

[1] A word much in use on Cape Cod, meaning the youngest member of a family.

"She 's got the doom o' silence," answered the captain. "She was born with it. She could n't hear the elements roar, and she won't be able to speak until kingdom come!"

"What 's her name?" asked Bob. "Why, it 's — it 's — Land o' lubbers, what boys you are!" exclaimed the captain. "I never thought of her name before. If she 's got any, *she* don't know what it is, poor little Torsh! And if it ain't any use to *her*, what does anybody else want with it?"

Challey was very quiet until bedtime, with the little mute to think about, but Bob wrote to his father:

DEER PAPA, We found a torshunt close by Gull Marsh where the wale is an' it belonged to Capen Barns an' it can't do anything eckcep jabber nor it can't hear a ellyfunt rore. But it likes us an we ar going to take it to Gull Marsh every day wen its hi tide.

The End.

ROBERT HUNTINGDON CHEZZLE.

III.

HOW THE FRENCH DOCTORS FRIGHTENED MRS. CHEZZLE, AND HOW HER ARRIVAL AT HER BROTHER'S HOUSE DELIGHTED LITTLE MARIA ANTOINETTE PENROY.

MR. THOMAS PENROY was full fifteen years older than his sister, Mrs. John Chezzle. He had left America before she was as old as her son Bob, and, consequently, she did not remember him. In her young school-days she had heard her father and mother talk about him as a roving, eccentric fellow, who was sure never to be very prosperous. He could make his own way in the world, they thought; but when a short letter came, announcing that he had married a poor orphan French girl without a penny, they were much troubled lest he would never be able to make a living for two people. His letters were very short, and written at long intervals. By the time one came, mentioning the birth of a

daughter, his father was no longer living. And the letter which he wrote a few years later, telling of the death of his wife, never reached its destination. Then his mother had died. His sister had married Mr. Chezzle, dwelling-places were changed on both sides of the water, addresses lost, and no more letters were written.

It was five years since Mrs. Chezzle had heard anything of her brother "Tom," as she had always heard him called, and now she was summoned to his bedside, only to see him die, — a sad, bewildering summons, relieved only by the thought of his little girl whom she was going to befriend.

Thinking, all through her long journey, of finding both father and child poorly provided for, busying her motherly genius with plans for relieving them, what was her surprise when she was met at Havre by an elegant-looking gentleman who introduced himself as M. Théophile Roubaix, her brother's lawyer, and conducted her in the most luxurious manner possible to a house which was, in her eyes, a very palace! The beauty of its surroundings, its gardens, the elegance of the apartments assigned to her, dazed her completely for awhile.

MAU, *June* 18.

Of course I am going to write a journal (she wrote to her husband a day or two after her arrival). Who would n't, finding one's self, as I do, suddenly set down in the midst of a story? I expected to find my brother in some poverty-stricken little cottage, and I find him in a palace! I was prepared to assume the heaviest burdens, the gravest responsibility — to be ready, day or night, for the most exhausting labor of nursing. Instead of all that I find myself treated like a queen, with every luxury and a host of servants at my command. My brother is under the care of eminent physicians (so I should judge after a talk of half an hour with one of them), who superintend everything in the sick-room. He has also a most accomplished attendant.

I could not help crying when I was with the doctor; for although a stranger to me, Thomas Penroy is *my brother*, and he is dying! My French was not only very rusty, but mixed with sobs, and I don't know how much of it the gentleman understood. But I managed to gather from him that poor Tom would probably linger some weeks, perhaps a month or two, so I shall not try to see him until he sends for me.

But I have seen Maria. When I arrived she was out with her governess, and did not return for full two hours. Then she was smuggled into the house, and had her dinner without my knowing it, for the housekeeper and governess together were bent upon making an imposing ceremony of the child's presentation to her aunt, and she was to be dressed in her finest gown for the occasion.

N. B. They had not seen me when they arranged it all, and did not know of certain old gowns in my trunk, brought to be cut down and made over for my niece! Imagine their French noses, if they had!

But Maria got the better of them. I was kneeling before one of my trunks when I heard a sound, and turning, saw in the doorway a little girl in her petticoats, with a pale, wee face, and a cloud of red-gold hair, holding aside a curtain and peering at me wistfully.

I had been bewildered until then, but the sight of her restored me, for I knew it was Maria. And I knew that she had no mother, and would soon have no father. Was there any need of knowing more? All in a moment, as I held out my arms to her, my own home, with you and the children in it, seemed like the real palace, while this, with all its

grandeur and the one little orphan, seemed desolate!

Maria looked doubtful for a moment, but I told her that I had two dear little boys at home, far away, and that the sight of her made me long to see them; would she not come to me? Then she ran to me, clasped her arms around me, and would not let me go.

The maid looked cross enough when she came, in answer to my bell, and discovered Maria, for whom she had been searching. But she looked crosser still when I told her I would finish dressing the child myself, and bade her bring the necessary things to my room. If I had given her a chance to think about it, I don't believe she would have obeyed me.

June 19. Since then Maria does not like to lose sight of me at all, and as she needs me more than anybody else does, I have her with me almost constantly.

Tom sent for me this morning. It seemed very strange to sit by his bed and realize that the man lying there, with a white face, brown hair and beard, was my own brother. He looked at me with his steady, penetrating, dark eyes, as if he could find out everything I had ever thought in my life. Then he said suddenly to his attendant, "Send for Mlle.

Maria," and watched the door until she came. She hurried to him, kissed him half a dozen times, and I saw that nothing in the world was of any importance to him compared with her. "That 'll do," he said, faintly, as if he was tired, and Maria, moving back, nestled herself against me. He looked at us for a little while, as I stroked her hair, then, in a much stronger, firmer tone, said, "And *that* will do, too!"

I thought he was annoyed at seeing how familiar we had grown, but Maria understood him better, and, laughing, hugged me at once.

"Will you go to heaven to-day, then, papa?" she asked him in French, quite cheerfully.

"No," he answered, "I shall not have time!" which was certainly a singular remark for a dying man to make. "Go away now, my child," he added, "and send Mme. Touleson to me." The child obeyed and went. Then Tom held his hand out to me, and said: "You are a good girl to have come, Helen, and your husband is a clever fellow, or he would not have let you. I wanted to see if Maria took to you — that is all." I began to say something, but he repeated, "That is all!" and did not speak again until Mme. Touleson, the housekeeper, entered. I had only seen her once before, but she had made

me feel, somehow, that my clothes were cheap, and I was so sure that she would detect the least mistake I might make in speaking her language (she does not speak or understand a word of any other) that I forgot, in her presence, all the French I ever knew, and bungled frightfully.

"What is it that Monsieur will give me the extreme pleasure of doing for him?" she asked, looking as if it would not be worth while for *me* to try to understand. A blow could not have startled me more than his answer:

"I wish the keys given to my sister, Mrs. Chezzle. She will now be the mistress of my house, and everybody in it will obey her!" Then, turning his head toward his attendant, he said: "Antoine, go with Mme. Touleson to get the keys, and bring them to me at once!"

Mme. Touleson was about to speak, but Tom silenced her by a motion of his hand, and she left the room. Antoine returned with the keys, which he handed to me on a little silver tray.

Tom was very much exhausted, so I left him in a few moments. Of course I went to Mme. Touleson immediately. I expected to find her hurt and angry, but they all seem to understand Tom, and she told me, besides, that "Monsieur Pennaroi" had explained to her, a

month ago, that I was coming to take command of everything. So I only found her dignified and stiff, anxious to help me discover that, in the arrival of the sister of Mr. Penroy, the people of the house had expected a grand lady, with an American maid, "and perhaps a few little *négres* as her attendants! But," she said, in her most formal French, "Madame has come *alone*, without even a train to her gown, or so much as two poor little diamonds in her ears, and she is" —

"Nevertheless, she is the sister of Mr. Penroy!" I thought fit to say, in my clearest and most distinct tones, looking straight into her eyes. I was pleased to see her embarrassed, and, saying simply that I would like her to come to my parlor in an hour, I left her, afraid that I should feel sorry and apologize if I stayed any longer.

Poor Tom! Is n't it pitiful that he should not have realized until now, when he is dying, that it is good to have somebody near who really belongs to him?

June 20. Mme. Touleson came to me at the appointed hour, as polite and deferential as possible. It suited me very well to grant her desire to delay her departure for a few days, as it gave me an opportunity to learn the

ways of the house. She must have reported me to the servants as a dragon, or at least a worthy person, in spite of the absence of a train and diamond ear-rings, for they are all respectful and anxious to please me.

June 21. I am settling down into a place of my own here, and, without any conceit, I believe my presence is acceptable. Maria is my shadow. I have had my parlor and sleeping-room change furniture with each other, so that now her bedroom opens into mine, and she is so happy that her face has lost already the intensely wistful look which was painful to see. Tom looks happier too. But he is certainly very strange. He is under the care of two doctors who hold consultations in the library, and come, one or both, every day. I cannot learn what is the matter with him, for when I ask, they use so many scientific terms that I should need both the French and English dictionaries in order to understand them. But they assure me that he cannot survive the summer.

He has made every arrangement for his death, and the event is spoken of with perfect freedom. "*Quand Monsieur sera mort*," this or that will take place, and the phrase is so common that I am getting used to it my-

self. Every morning he sends for Maria and me, and she is as likely as not to ask him if he is going to heaven in the course of the day, just as our boys ask you if you are going to the office.

He is certainly very ill. We step about in the quietest way, and all wear soft slippers, for he notices every sound.

June 23. During most of the year Maria has teachers enough to supply an academy, but as this is vacation, she has only a music teacher to sit with her at the piano an hour every day in the room which is called her study, as far as possible from the apartments her father occupies. She is very fond of music, and now that I take my work and sit by during her practicing hour, she enjoys it immensely.

She is also anxious to speak English, since it is my language and that of her cousins, Challey and Bob, about whom she questions me interminably. Tom rarely speaks anything but French to her. But her talent for languages is small, and she has fixed upon the letters of our boys as her standard of perfection! She was with me yesterday when their first letters came, and it was funny to watch her and hear her comments as I read them. I began with Challey's.

"'*June* 15. It is just high tide sailing afore the wind to be at Captain Pepper's.'"

"Oh!" said Maria, in French; "are they in a boat?"

I explained what Challey meant, and she was so delighted that I had to repeat the phrase several times. Then I went on: "We haul down sails every night. The captain's bunk is in the little room aft ours. Satterday night we had a hurrycane out at sea in two tubs. Captain Pepper skowered us and its grate fun. We skrub in one tub and rench off in the other. We have to ware biled shirts on Sunday but Mrs. Tuckit has to histe our colors becaus Captain Pepper says he wuoulde rather rassel with a Pirate than tie boze."

"Please, chère Tante, what is 'biled' and to 'h-h-hysste couleur'?" asked Maria.

"The boys wear dark flannel shirts all the week," I answered, "but put on starched linen ones on Sunday, and I *suppose* hoisting their colors means putting on their neckties."

"Oh, that is beautiful!" exclaimed Maria, and I had to let her repeat, "biled" and "hyste the couleurs" many times. I read on: "The captain makes us skore up the log books on Sunday and that means taking turns riting to you and papa so Bob is riting to papa.

The Captain says to give you his dooty and tell you we are as well as bluefish and he can't rite because it makes him purrspire too much.

Good-bye

CHARLES TEMPLETON PENROY CHEZZLE."

Maria was so delighted that I imprudently read her Bob's letter about the *torshunt* which they found. Imprudently, because she has teased me ever since to take her where she can see one.

June 24. A mysterious individual comes occasionally and works by himself, sometimes for a little while, sometimes for several hours, in a little room on the ground floor which has an entrance of its own from the garden. That part of the house is not under my supervision, so I have not discovered who he is.

Maria and I take our work when we make our morning visit to her father, and it amuses him to watch us. I think it diverts him by taking his mind from himself. We are very quiet, of course, talking little and in low tones, avoiding whispers, which, I think, are generally exasperating to an invalid. It is better for Tom to hear and understand what we say than to make an effort to do either, or have any thought about it. So we say what we please,

and try not to be rasping. It looks as if we succeeded admirably, too. I am dressing one of Maria's dolls and trying to teach her to sew. She has been taught to study only effect in dress, from a French maid's point of view; I am setting up a standard of neatness and propriety for her, making the doll's clothes like a baby's, dainty, simple, and home-made, not shoppy or machiney.

Tom watches it all with great interest and enjoys it. He speaks little, but likes to listen, and is delighted at any evidence of Maria's affection for me. This morning she folded the doll to her bosom, like a little mother, and said, looking up to me: "I will love it the same way that you love me, — as if it was my child." Tom turned his face away, and I fancied he was thinking sadly of Maria's mother. I waited a little while before asking if we tired him. "No — no, never!" he answered hastily. "Don't go for a long time." And when Antoine announced the arrival of the doctor, he detained me a moment to say: "You are putting healthy ideas into the child's head, Nelly. Keep it up; I believe she was starving for you." He will have no one else remain in the room while we are with him, and looks disappointed when our visit is over.

And, really, I think the doctors need not come so often. I insist upon receiving their orders myself, lying in wait for Dr. Frédiqueue, who is the regular physician in charge, the other, Dr. De la Quille, being the consulting one. But I am sure that all their conversations in the study cannot be about poor Tom. His condition alters so little from day to day. I am an ignoramus, and what seems trivial to me is really of the gravest consequence. For instance, the two doctors came together to-day and were much disturbed to learn the fact of Maria's and my daily visits, with our work, in Tom's room.

It will not do *at all*, they say; and Dr. De la Quille said most decidedly to me: "The excitement is excessively dangerous to Monsieur, and may shorten his life perceptibly." And then he explained something about the action of a particular chamber of the brain, but I could not follow him at all. I am sorry, and will certainly take no more work to the sick-room. We must also shorten our visits.

June 25. "Where 's the doll?" asked Tom, the first thing this morning. I told him the doctors thought we had better not bring occupation of any kind into his room, but he stopped me with a sudden "Nonsense!" bade

Maria bring our work, and was impatient until she returned, declaring that it did him good to see something going on, etc., etc. I was not fortunate in my way of objecting, for he seized upon a fancy that my ideas were the only sound ones in the house, and was vexed at having even such a trifling one interfered with. It was with some anxiety, therefore, that I asked Dr. Frédiqueue what I should do about it.

He shook his head, and said that Tom's irritability was a discouraging symptom. "But," he said, "Monsieur is too ill to be opposed, and his *fantaisie* must be indulged. In effect, since he has adopted this singular caprice, it is positively necessary *now* that you should not enter his room in the morning unless you are accompanied by both Mademoiselle and her doll. Do not omit the doll upon any account; the result might be fatal to Monsieur. If Madame wishes the life of her brother prolonged, she will pay strict attention to this matter. It may seem of no importance to a person who is ignorant of medical science," (I thought he was looking particularly hard at me,) "but it is the physician who has had the greatest experience, and whose knowledge is the most profound, — it is only the physician of

this distinction," (he touched one of his shirt studs as he said "this," unconsciously, of course,) "who understands the significance of a thing so trifling and absurd as Mademoiselle's doll!"

Maria appeared in the study doorway just in time to hear the closing phrase, her beloved doll in her arms; luckily, Dr. Frédiqueue did not see her glower at him with anger, which must have burst out if two gentlemen had not accompanied and entered the study with her. I disappeared before they saw me, and she followed. But, as they stood facing the light a moment, I had a full view of them, and I never saw two such cross-grained, forbidding countenances. Their business was with the doctor, and I learned that they were Tom's lawyers, Messieurs Roubaix and Duvergne. If I had the naming of them I would call them "Gruffit and Crusty." I certainly had not recognized M. Roubaix as the affable gentleman who met me on my arrival at Havre.

June 28. The knowledge that Tom was really worse when I had thought him better has a depressing effect upon me. I was so worried yesterday while Maria and I were in his room, because she talked a little more than usual, that I asked Dr. Frédiqueue to come

again in the evening as a particular favor to me. I was wrong to think that the doctors came too often. I have no doubt now that their extreme watchfulness is absolutely necessary. They both came, although they had great difficulty in arranging their other professional visits accordingly. They must stand at the head of the profession, they have so many "extremely critical cases" to attend to. The evening visit vexed Tom, however, and they decided not to repeat it. It was dangerous, they told me, to make any diversion from the regular course of treatment. "Madame means well," said Dr. De la Quille, "undoubtedly; but, in her affliction, she is incapable of judging, and must trust her brother entirely to our skill." So I feel as if I had been interfering, and, if Tom should be worse, it would be my fault. I wish the poor fellow had a more efficient, wiser sister than I!

Since Dr. Frédiqueue explained the serious aspect of his fancy about the doll-dressing, I am so worried that my fingers tremble fearfully over the work, and I am afraid Tom will perceive it. Moreover, he will insist that everything I suggest is right. He would not listen to any criticism of me when the doctors annoyed him by their visit the other evening, although

it was entirely my fault that they came. I told him so, but he declared that I was perfectly innocent, never worried him for a moment, and that the day seemed long and tiresome when Maria and I left him to himself. The doctor consents to our making a second visit this afternoon, by way of an experiment, but I have told him I am afraid, in my ignorance, that I will kill Tom!

June 29. We make two visits daily to Tom's room. Once more my stupidity has injured him, I am positive. On our first afternoon visit I took no work to his room, and gave Maria a book to look at, thinking we would be very quiet. But Tom was not at all pleased, and asked what we usually did at that hour. I told him that when the weather permitted, Maria went out, and unless I went with her, I enjoyed rummaging among his books in the library. Since he had claimed us for a part of the afternoon, I said, we had arranged another hour for fresh air and exercise.

Then he wanted to know what interested me in the library. I answered that it would be easier to say what did *not* interest me there. "It is such a beguiling room, Tom," I said, "that I don't like to enter it unless I have at least an hour to spare. Where did you

find that fine old copy of 'The Vicar of Wakefield'?"

It was an unlucky question, for he exclaimed:

"Ah, 'The Vicar!' The good, old 'Vicar!' Get it, Nelly; a page or two of 'The Vicar' would do me good!"

I had to get it, of course, and he made me read a full half hour; and then I was so frightened lest it was doing him harm, that I made an excuse to stop. The doctors say he shows evident signs of increased nervous debility, and they are more troubled than ever.

June 30. Maria just startled me so in her father's room, that I actually could not speak for a moment. Really, my anxiety makes me so nervous now, when I am with Tom, that I sit purposely where he cannot see my face. The doctors are so sure to disapprove of anything which diverts or excites him in the least, — his nerves, they say, are in such a delicate state, — and it seems as if everything we do, however innocent, excites him more and more! I don't know whether I have mentioned how extremely fastidious he is about everything, especially where Maria is concerned. I had decided not to read her any more of the boys' letters, because the sailor talk she had already

picked up from them had worried me ever since her father took her to task one day for using some French expression which he called commonplace. "What would he think of my darling boys, whose one ambition in that respect will inevitably be, for the next three months, to imitate Captain Pepper?" I said to myself.

Well, this morning Maria went into ecstasies over the dress which I had just finished and allowed her to put on her doll. Tom was delighted over her pleasure, and I thought the excitement too much for him. So, imagine my feelings when Maria looked up suddenly to me and cried joyfully, in English, which she very rarely speaks: "Oh, chère Tante, it is pairfecte! It is like high-tide sail-ing af-fore the wint! Now hyste the couleurs!"

Tom gave a sudden start and cried out: "What? What did you say, Maria? Repeat it!"

The child was frightened, and stammered, all in French, except the sea terms: "I said — I said only, Papa, it was like to — to — like to the high-tide sail-ing af-fore the wint! And I ask Tante Helène to — to — hi-hi-histe the couleurs!"

"And what does 'hi-hi-histe the couleurs' mean, I should like to know? And where

did you learn such choice language?" her father asked, waving me off, as he saw me ready to explain.

"I learned it in the letters of my fine cousins," said Maria, in true grammatical form; "and it means to say — 'hi-i-iste the couleurs' put the necktie onto the neck of my cousin Shall-lee."

Tom burst into a roar of laughter. He laughed again and again, and asked the child to repeat it. He insisted also that I should take the letters with me to read to him this afternoon. "Why, Tom," I said, "I thought you were so anxious about Maria's learning anything commonplace, that I was repenting having read them to her, and vowing not to do so any more!"

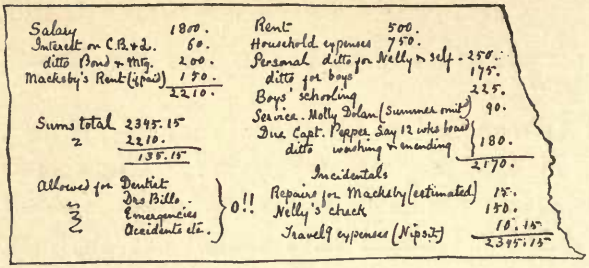
"How can you deny such a pleasure to my offspring, Helen?" he exclaimed. "Commonplace? I call those expressions anything but that; they are very choice, — very choice indeed, Maria, my child!"

And he called me back, as we were leaving him, to say, confidentially: "What she gets from common *people* is common*place*, Nelly; but let her get anything from your children she can which creates a personal interest in them. She has not too many to love,

poor child! I want her to love her cousins and" —

He coughed and broke off suddenly, saying, in his tone of pleasantry again: "The expressions are decidedly choice, my dear. I don't think her teachers have taught her anything more so! I enjoyed them quite as much as Goldsmith. Bring 'The Vicar' along again this afternoon."

I had to say I would, but I 'm worried to death at his getting so roused. What *will* the doctors say?



IV.

MOLLY DOLAN TAKES MR. CHEZZLE'S CLEAN CLOTHES HOME ON TOP OF A CHERRY PIE, AND MAKES THE MACKSBYS' COOK UNHAPPY BY CLEARING OUT THE TUBS AND MENDING THE CLOTHES-WRINGER FOR HER.

ABOUT a week after Mrs. Chezzle's departure, her husband was alone one evening in that third-story back room of his house in Roxbury, sitting at his writing-desk, hard at work. His desk was an old-fashioned one, with a bookcase above and a slanting lid in the middle, which let down on two slides with brass knobs. It had belonged to his grandfather, and was made of dark mahogany, with quaint carvings and handsome brass handles. The desk part of it was full of little compartments. Challey and Bob kept their own particular treasures in two shallow drawers in the centre, over the space allotted to the inkstand, holders, etc. Challey's drawer contained three Indian

arrowheads, four dead butterflies, a spider's nest, a revolutionary button, and two dollars and sixty-four cents, — his pocket-money, which he was saving for a microscope. Bob's drawer contained a specimen of coal, a magnet, a whale's tooth, two pieces of broken, red glass, the rusty frame of a pair of spectacles, and ninety-nine cents, — his pocket-money, which he was saving to buy a canoe.

Mr. Chezzle had a paper before him which he had covered with writing and figures. He was working at a problem which he could not solve. His account-book told, to a penny, exactly what his expenses were. He was comparing it with his bank-book, and trying, for about the twentieth time, to make the sums in the latter add up a little larger and those in the former add up a little less. Unless he could do this, he did not know how he was going to pay the bills which were running up so fast on all sides. He had gone over them until he knew them all by heart, and, with the closest calculation, provided there were no "extras" or "accidentals," if he sent his wife the smallest possible allowance, if the new tenants required nothing in the way of repairs, and if they paid their rent promptly, — he wondered how big that "if" was, — in short, if every-

thing ran smoothly, the summer expenses amounted to considerably more than the sum which he calculated was the most he could afford for them. He had taken out a "Bond and Mortgage" paper, and said to himself, that, if he sold that investment, he would get through the difficulty. But that paper represented the savings of his lifetime. He could not make up his mind to break into the one little nest-egg he had set aside for his wife and children. In his abstraction he pulled out the children's drawers and counted over their savings. "Poor little chaps!" he said to himself, putting his hand in his pocket and taking out some loose change. He fingered it with a great longing to drop it into the drawers. "Have n't any right to! There 's a miserly comfort in making that ninety-nine cents a dollar, though," he thought, dropping a cent into Bob's drawer, and then restoring the money to his pocket, said, half aloud, "Poor little shavers!"

He need not have pitied them a bit. They were as happy as crickets, and had not thought of their pocket-money once since they had left home. And if they could have guessed what was in his mind, their hearts would have nearly burst with joy at giving every precious penny to him with the idea that it would help matters.

Mr. Chezzle knew that, too, but he sighed, and said, "Poor little shavers!" all the same.

A knock startled him. "Come in!" he said, closing the drawers, and Molly entered with a basket of clean clothes.

"Ha, Molly, that is you, is it?" said Mr. Chezzle, and, somehow, his face brightened.

Anybody would brighten at sight of Molly's honest face and pleasant smile.

"Good avenin', Mr. Chizzle-sir!" she said, setting the basket on the table. "The things is oll complate, an' have yez anny more letters from the byes come since?"

"I believe I read them all to you, Molly," said Mr. Chezzle. "But I shall write to them this evening; can't you give me a message?"

"Indade an' ye can spake a tistament far me," said Molly, drawing a chair in front of him, sitting down on the edge of it, and speaking eagerly. "Ye can say, far *me*, to that Captain Pepper, sir, that he shuddent be engaged in his occupayshun of following the say, whilst he laves them childers to make amusement far thimsilves wid a whale!"

"Oho! ho!" laughed Mr. Chezzle. "Why, Molly, what they have written about that is every bit gammon! A whale could not get into such shallow water. They have seen some

floating log, or cask, or possibly a row-boat upside down, and have mistaken it for a whale. Have you been worrying yourself about that?"

"Indade an' I have, Mr. Chizzle-sir!" said Molly, beginning gravely, but growing excited as she went on. "It 's not them byes wid their school knowledge comin' into me kitchen manny a time an' tellin' me the hull multiplicayshun table, savin' what 's beyant six times nine I think it is that 's where Bobby comes to a stand, an' that 's more than ye should expect from his years! An' it 's not them knows all that an' don't know a whale whin they sot their own blessèd eyes on him! No! An' it 's a say-captain that thinks no more of a whale than he thinks of — of — a miskaty!"

It cheered Mr. Chezzle to hear Molly go on about his boys, and he tipped back in his chair and listened with evident pleasure to her while she expatiated some minutes on the subject. But he could by no means satisfy her as to Captain Pepper's ability to keep the children out of danger.

Presently she rose and began to unpack her basket. She put the clothes away carefully into the bureau, and was just lifting something with great care from the bottom of the basket, when

there was a sound of loud voices in the hall below, a heavy tramp of feet on the stairs, and a bang on Mr. Chezzle's door.

Molly opened it, and a sharp-faced woman presented herself. She was the servant of the new tenants, and looked tough and knotty, untidy, and as cross as two sticks.

Ignoring the existence of Molly, she said sharply: "Miss Macksby 'd like ye to come down-stairs immayjit, Mr. Chizzle! The wash-tubs is lakin' an' the pipes floodin' an' ye 'd be plazed to buy a noo clo'es-wringer an' sind the plumber in the marnin' airly!"

Mr. Chezzle's cares had come back with a rush. He was beginning to say that he would examine into the matter, when Molly interposed, saying with some spirit:

"It 's oll jist the craziest nonsinse, Mr. Chizzle-sir, about thim tubs! An' if they lake, it 's the fault an' nothing else of some ignorant gurril what" —

"And who are *you* that 's a-spakin'?" demanded the other woman. "If anny one 's crazy, it 's yersilf, whoever ye are, an'" —

"Matilda!" called a worried voice from down-stairs, "just ask Mr. Chezzle if he can't come down into the kitchen himself."

Mr. Chezzle made a movement to go at once,

when Molly again stopped him by calling over the banisters: "Mr. Chizzle has bizness of the extramest impartence an' can't lave his room, — not if the house is oll ready to float off! Shut the doore lively, Mr. Chizzle-sir, an' lave me to attind to thim!" she added, in a comfortable tone, and, brushing by Matilda, she trotted down-stairs before anybody could interfere with her. Matilda followed, of course, and kept up a volley of complimentary remarks, which she fired at Molly's back. The kitchen was a dismal sight. The hearth covered with ashes and bits of coal, with the scuttle, shovel, poker, and a dish-pan in the midst. Unwashed dishes filled the sink and covered the table. There was a piece of an ashy, soggy pie on the dresser, any number of rags were lying about, and everything was in general disorder.

Molly was ready to blaze as she passed through the room which it had been her pride to keep neat. "Statch-awerry was nivver claner than I left it!" she muttered, as she looked back into it before stepping into the laundry. She jerked her bonnet off, hung it on a corner of the clothes-horse, rolled up her sleeves, thrust her arm courageously into the unpleasant-looking water which filled one of the tubs, and pulled out the stopper.

Matilda kept up her scold while she held a light and watched the operation.

"Say on! say on!" said Molly. "Don't be quiet, if it hurts yez! Don't conthrol yer wurrids for my sake, becaze I 'm not mindin' thim no more than you 'll mind the tubses lakin' whin I git troo wid 'em!"

She made a careful examination of the three tubs, and then, after washing her arms under a faucet and drying them with her handkerchief, tied on her bonnet again, while she said quietly: "Annybody can make tubs lake if they lave 'em dry long enough. I remarked the day yez come that the tub in the carner was thirsty, an' here it 's a wake sinse an' the poor thing has had ne'er a thrink yit! An' ye 'll not find the pipes shtopped up afther me pullin' all thim old rags out. A little sinse now an' thin comes in *han*dy, an' I 'd advise yez to git a supply the nixt oppor*chu*nity; an' I 'll take the wringer if ye *plaze*."

Matilda, keeping up a volley of indignant brogue, struck out with the wringer which Molly took from her. She looked it over carefully, and then, giving Matilda a withering look, said dryly: "I 'll mend it mesilf, up-stairs, an' bring it back against I go whome!"

Matilda followed her to the door, with a few

remarks; but Molly turned before she went out, and said, in a voice which insisted upon being heard: "I 'm extramely thankful to yez for yer perliteness! Ye 've got the manners of a lady, ye have, an' if ye want annything more, let me know it, an' I 'll call agin!" With which words she sailed out of the kitchen.

Returning to Mr. Chezzle, she closed the door behind her, and said: "There 's nothin' to call ye down-stairs atall-atall, sir! It 's the pipes that was stranglin' and one o' the tubs that was cryin' for a thrink; an' it 's the wringer jist beggin' for a screw in this place, an' the drahr wid the tools is on yer own shilf there, Mr. Chizzle-sir."

"Ah!" said Mr. Chezzle, in a tone of great satisfaction, selecting a screw, and, with the weight of those accounts upon him, feeling as if Molly had warded off some enormous burden. "Molly, you 're a blessing to mankind!"

"An' that 's more than that gurr'l thinks I 'm after bein' to *women*-kind, sir!" said Molly, her face breaking into smiles all over. It fell dolefully again as she added: "But it 's a sight I 'm glad the byes' mother is spared the lookin' at — is the kitchen! There was n't a thing, from the tubs down to the tay-kittle, but was broken-hearted an' cryin' out to me!"

But the wringer was mended, and it was time for her to go home. She went to the basket and took out the parcel she had had in her hand when Matilda knocked. It proved to be a cherry pie which she had made herself with great care, and which she laid on the desk, right on top of Mr. Chezzle's account-book.

"There!" she said, with pride. "Fresh this marnin', Mr. Chizzle-sir, an' it does me good to set it before yez, after seein' that hungry old piece on the dresser down-stairs this blesséd minute. An' I hope," she added, solemnly, "for the sake of Mrs. Chizzle an' the byes, that it was nivver yersell ate what's gone o' that pie, sir!"

Mr. Chezzle was as delighted as any schoolboy with Molly's gift, and began at once to cut out a piece of it with his penknife, expressing his gratitude, and at the same time relieving her of much anxiety by telling her that he had arranged to get his meals at a restaurant.

She went away with a beaming face and the remark, which she put her head in at the door on purpose to make: "An' the juice is rich an' beautiful, Mr. Chizzle-sir!"

V.

CAPTAIN PEPPER'S TALK WITH THE CHILDREN ON THE PORCH.

OF course Challey and Bob knew nearly all the little boys in Nipsit. Their advantages for making acquaintances were exceptional this summer, because Captain Pepper was as fond of children as ever "Rip Van Winkle" was. He could not show himself in the street or sit down in his front porch for any length of time without a flock of children of all sizes and patterns gathering around him. And if he was seen even in his boat alone, people would say: "There goes Captain Zenas — where 's his crew?" The very babies cried for him. When the Tuckit children were going through the teething period, he had to go to the post-office by a back way, unless he wanted to take some of them along. The irresistible magnetism of a good heart, which showed itself throughout his personality, attracted all young

people to him. Even the little mute, who had never heard his kindly voice or one of his enchanting stories, would bang on the window-pane, if she saw him pass the house, as if she meant to break the glass, and pantomime the act of hauling up the sail of a boat, which was her way of begging him to take her with him. And he generally did so, for children were never in his way. If he was mending a net, or patching a sail, he could tell a story just as well meanwhile; and if he had work to do in "the shop," he could station a few children about on the shaving-heap, door-step, carpenter's-bench, or a dozen places as conveniently as he could put his tools away where they belonged.

Nobody could have been more watchful than he was over his two charges, Challey and Bob. He made it a point always to know where they were and in what company. They were never afraid to tell him, because, if he disapproved, he was sure to have something to propose which they liked better. "If a person has n't got wit enough to know how to turn the weathercocks of children's minds to suit himself, he 'd better not meddle with them," he used to say.

One day, returning with his mail from the

post-office, he met Challey and Bob, Alex Tuckit, Crissy Jones, Jim Holburn, and Zanzibar, filing out of his gate.

"Hold on! Where are ye bound?" he asked.

"Gull Ma'sh," they all answered at once.

"We 're going whaling!" said Bob, whose voice rang out above all the others.

"Well, heave-to a spell first, can't you?" said the captain. "Here 's a letter for you; don't you want to read it?"

"I — I 'd just as lieve wait till after supper," said Bob, in a hurry to get off. Challey tucked a long stick, which he had sharpened at one end for a harpoon, under his arm, and was breaking the seal of the letter while the captain was saying persuasively: "Well, whaling is serious work. It takes a long time to — to look after a whale when you 've caught him. Now, if you should read the letter first, you 'd have nothin' to interfere with business, and could go off and ketch the whale, and maybe have him skinned afore supper time — don't ye see?"

"Yes," said Challey, following the captain to the porch. "And this is from mamma, too. Come along, fellows, and hear Cap'm Pepper read it."

The captain put on his spectacles, while the

boys and the dog all sat down in a huddle around him. They giggled and punched one another until the captain was ready to begin.

"Now, boys," he said, "I want you to be quiet. When mothers put their sayins down, ther 's generally somethin' worth hearin'. So I 'd like to know first who 's goin' to listen."

"I am!" they all cried.

"I 'm goin' to listen like a house afire!" said little Jim Holburn, looking up into the captain's face.

"So you shall, chap. Come; — up here, chap!" Captain Pepper said, tapping his knee, and holding his hand out. Jim went and hid his frowzy head behind his hat, against the captain's blue flannel shirt. Poor little Jim! His mother had died last winter, and the only person left to take care of him was Miss Lizy Green, and she, according to Jim's account, "was n't blood-related nohow" to him, and was "only some kind of a cousin to somebody in the fam'ly that was dead!"

So the captain, who understood, patted Jim's shoulder while he read Mrs. Chezzle's letter to the boys. It was all about her life in the little French suburb, and about their cousin Maria Antoinette, who had so many toys that Mrs.

Chezzle doubted, she said, if even the 'Luella' could hold them all.

There was a murmur of "oh!" at the statement, and various sentiments were exchanged to the effect that it was a pity Maria could not sail over to Nipsit with the whole cargo, and that it was an awful waste to have toys meant only for girls in such abundance. If they were only little boats, and engines, and soldiers, what treasures they would be! Nothing else in the letter caused any particular excitement until a shout was raised by the postscript: "Maria and I are very curious to know what a 'torshunt' is. We suppose it is some strange animal brought by one of the sailors from a foreign land. Be careful not to let it bite you. I hope it is not dangerous."

"What in the name of wonder have you boys been writing to her about a torshent?" asked Captain Pepper.

"Why-ee!" cried Bob. "I wrat all about the time we found Ranna and saved her from being scalped by the Indians — don't you know?"

"Oho! ho! ho!" roared the captain, and Challey imitated him, shouting:

"Oho! ho! I say, Bob, Cap'm Pepper said the youngest child was a torshent; so Maria 's

one, of course. We 'll write and tell mamma to be careful *she* don't bite ! "

The idea caused so much fun that Alex Tuckit finally jumped up and said he thought they had " drapped anchor long 'nough," and that it was about time they " tacked for the Ma'sh."

Alex was invaluable to Challey and Bob, he knew so many sea-terms. After the children had gone the captain opened a letter addressed to himself, which he had forgotten until then. It was from Molly Dolan, and as the spelling was quite original, and there were no stops, it was a work of time to decipher it.

Molly wrote : —

" It 's a wild profeshun is followin' the sa for them thats boarn an brort up in botes an nevver noes wat it is to tred on firrm sile but larns to wawk on the rollling Dape an gets that yuste to it thade go to slape wid Wales an Allygaiters an no more is aven a Crockkydile to thim I mane than kittns wid thare ise shut but its thim bies makin frins wid a Wale that ime dramin of till I sa thim in me mind wawk doun his trote an its Bob wood be willin an not wate to No wat wuz beyant an its challe mite be dramin an find himsel inside the cratur an nivver no ware he Wuz nor the wa out an

du it he wud in his innysinse in spite of the korshun hede resaved from joner that wuz swollered at the sundy-skool but he wood not belave it an now wil yuze captin Pepperser lave him to convints himsel inside the Wale ide like to No Mary ann Dolan."

"Well! well!" said Captain Pepper to himself, rising and putting the letter in his pocket. "You can't put reason into a head where there are n't any brains for it to stick to!"

He went to the shop to do a little work, but his mind was disturbed. Molly's letter vexed, as much as it amused, him. He did not see why she should bother her head because the children chose to let her know they were building a whale-trap. They might build forty, if they wanted to, and what harm would there be if they fancied that they were going to catch even the old Sea Serpent, if they chose? It was about as safe an occupation as they could be engaged in, and, so far from worrying about it, he decided to put some nails and a tool or two in the "Luella," take her round by the marsh, through the guzzle, and after giving the youngsters a little help at their famous whale-trap, to treat them all to a sail home.

VI.

HOW LUCKY IT WAS THAT BOB'S LEG WAS NOT BITTEN ENTIRELY OFF.

IT was as difficult to distinguish what any one of the five little boys, all talking at once, was saying, as it would have been to tell which was which among their ten bare legs, walking so fast, all in a huddle, down the village street. Now and then one voice, oftenest Bob's, screamed down the others; but even that required skill. As they went hurrying by Elisha Barnes's neat cottage, they were stopped and silenced all at once by his little mute daughter banging, with all her might, upon one of the window-panes. She shook her hand to them, nodded and laughed with so much joy at beholding her friends Challey and Bob, that the boys stood in a row, looking over the fence and returning her gestures for a moment. Then she left the window and ran quickly

around to open the door, making vigorous signs to them, pointing down the road with one hand, and drawing a circle around her head with the forefinger of the other.

"Let her come! Let her come!" cried Challey. "She wants to get her hat and go with us. Do let her, Mrs. Barnes, won't you? *I'll* take care of her." Her mother had instantly followed the little one to the door, and, after a moment's hesitation, assented, and handed the child her hat.

Challey and Bob had been to see her several times since the day when she had been lost. They, especially Challey, had taken great pleasure in showing her their picture-books and teaching her to build houses in Captain Pepper's porch with their blocks. She had claimed Challey as her particular friend and protector from the moment when she had first seen him. Out of her helplessness and the boy's great heart ("like his mother's for oll the wurrld!" Molly Dolan often said) there had sprung up a strong sympathy and the first friendship which little Ranna had ever formed. Miranda — that was her name. Challey had asked until he found out. It was curious that so few people knew it; he could not understand that at first. But the reason was simply, as Captain Pepper

had said, because there was so little *use* for it. To attract Ranna's attention, her father, mother, and brother Shirley were obliged to touch her, to tap upon the floor or upon something by means of which she could feel the jar or vibration. Nobody called her by her name. Shirley, with that mysterious instinct of children which seeks to shield from observation natural defects in those they love, never talked about her much. He took a great deal of care of her, and was, consequently, not very often with the village children. They were invariably kind to her, would step out of her way, run to pick up things for her, and the like, but they had nothing in common with her. They could not understand her, and therefore regarded her only as a curiosity. And she regarded them — how? Who can tell?

With Challey and Bob it was different. They thought they had rescued her from a wild Indian, and they had certainly befriended her when she was in great distress. Their very ignorance of her affliction had made the best beginning possible to their friendship, leading them to treat her just as they would any other child. So she trotted along now, perfectly content, looking up at Challey with her intelligent eyes, now and then crooning her inarticu-

late monotones, and constantly gesticulating with one hand, while she held her companion's with the other.

"I 'm so used to seein' her, that I never think about her at all," said Jim Holburn.

"*I* do — I like to make her gobble," said Crissy Jones.

"She *don't* gobble!" cried Bob, "any more than you do; an' if you say that, I 'll — I 'll" —

"Come on, then, an' do it!" said Crissy, always ready for fisticuffs, and squaring off.

"All right!" said Bob, doubling up his fists in a way which showed that he was not used to it.

Crissy was delighted. "Hoo-ray for Dixie!" he cried. "A fight for Dummy! A fight for Dummy!" and he knocked off Bob's hat to begin with.

"Hold up there!" screamed Challey, letting go of Ranna, and pushing himself between Crissy and Bob. "If you 're going to fight Bob, you 've got to fight me first, I tell you; and you shan't call Ranna 'Dummy,' either!"

"Dummy! Dummy! Dummy!" squealed Criss, dancing around joyfully, with fists first striking out at Challey and then at Bob.

"I *will* fight him!" screamed Bob. "I *will* fight him, even if he beats!"

"Hold on, I say!" cried Alex, coming to the rescue and seizing Criss from behind. "If you 're boun' to fight, Criss Jones, take a feller yer own size!" and Criss rolled over in the dust.

Before he could get up, Bob straddled over his body, Challey sat down on his legs, and Zanzibar, who thought it was all a play got up for his benefit, pounced upon the heap.

"Now, Criss Jones," cried Alex, trying to hold down his arms, while the dog was careering, "you 've got to promise to behave yerself, or else you shan't go with us; we 'll go back an' get Captain Pepper!"

"Yes!" screamed Challey. "An' make him say he won't call Ranna 'Dummy!' *He* 's a dummy, an' she is n't!"

"Wait till I git hold o' you jest, Chal Chezzle!" said Criss.

"Promise!" cried Alex.

And there they were, all screaming at once, Ranna looking frightened, and little Jim holding her away from the quarreling boys. But Criss was so overpowered that he promised at last, with a very bad grace and an ominous fist at Challey.

"I 'll hev a settlin' with you for callin' *me* a dummy!" he said. "What *I* said was true, an' what *you* said is a lie, for she *is* dumb!"

"She is *not* dumb!" cried Challey, so furious that, for a moment, every one else was silent. "*Animals* are dumb, and — and people that have n't got wits. Her mother says that at the ins'tute over to Boston, where she goes sometimes on purpose to learn signs to show to Ranna, they call the people *mutes*, and they don't *like* to be called dumb; and it 's meaner to do it to Ranna because she can't hear you and tell you not to! And if you can't understand that, you *are* dumb, and I" —

"Belay now, Challey!" cried Alex. "Don't you go and put a match to him again."

"Well," said Crissy, "what *do* ye call her when she makes them noises an' slings her arms roun' every wich way an' don't mean nothin' at all?"

"She *does* mean something," said Challey; they were walking along again, amicably now; — "only she does n't know how to say it. Everything she does means *something*, and if we were only smart enough, we might know what. Captain Pepper told us a lot about Ranna. He said, if we only knew how to understand her, she could teach us beautiful things, maybe, because — because she has n't learned anything wrong, or wicked, and her heart is pure, and perhaps" —

"Yes, and he said she could teach us other things besides goodness," cried Bob, "because her eyes are a great deal brighter than talking-folkses eyes, and she can move quicker" —

"I guess she can't move any quicker than *me!*" cried Jim, who liked to tell of his accomplishments. "I can run like sixty!"

"Pooh!" shouted Bob. "*She* can run like — like a *million!*"

This was a crushing statement; but as the popular sentiment now was in favor of heaping nothing but praise upon the unconscious little Ranna, Crissy was silent.

When they reached the marsh the tide was pretty high, and they looked for the whale immediately. Not finding it, they fell to playing with their boats. They rolled up their trousers as high as possible, and were busy, in a few minutes, wading in and out of the water, working at a dam in one place, and a wharf in another, with occupation delightfully unlimited, both in quantity and pleasure. Challey had Ranna to take care of, so he did not enter fully into the sport, but continually returned to her where she sat in a dry place among the rushes. On the way there she had found a bird's-nest with a broken egg-shell in it, and she was studying it. Children with the gift of speech would

not have looked at it for more than a minute. But Ranna *could not ask questions!* She had to discover all she could by herself, and let the rest go. So she examined the nest, turned it over and over, traced with her small forefinger some of the twigs, and tried to find out whether it grew so, or who made it, and why the egg was broken. She only asked one thing which Challey understood. Spreading out her arms, she moved them like wings, as when she had imitated the gulls, then laid her cheek on her open hand and shut her eyes. Opening them again, she pointed to the nest and looked at Challey. Challey puzzled a moment or two, and then, repeating her signs, nodded and pointed to the sky. She wanted to know if birds slept in the nest, and he had told her that they did, but they had flown away. He wished he knew what she was thinking about while she was in such a brown study over it. She would not have known that it had anything to do with birds if she had not seen a ground-bird's nest once, with four little young ones in it.

While she was busy in this way, Alex and Crissy were at work upon the dam, and Bob and Jim were sailing their boats.

Suddenly, down went Ranna's nest, up she sprang, and pointed to the water, running from

boy to boy to make each one look. Her eyes were always the first to discover everything. It had seemed as if she could not see anything from her seat among the rushes.

"Hi! it 's the whale!" screamed Bob, in a minute up to his thighs in the water by the trap.

Sure enough, a large, clumsy creature of some sort had got into the shallow water and was swimming in great curves, trying to find the opening by which he had entered. It was easy to follow its movements because of the big fin in the middle of its back, which stuck out of the water and made an enormous wake.

Here was the chance for which the boys had waited so long! Alex stationed himself on one side of the trap, Crissy and Bob on the other, with planks ready to drop between the stakes as soon as the fish should be obliging enough to swim through the little creek into the inner pond. But it declined to swim anywhere near the creek. It only curved, rapidly and stupidly, in huge figure 8s, around, and back, and around again.

"Give it up!" cried Bob, in a few minutes; and leaving his plank to Crissy, he waded out and ran to the edge of the bay, where the fish,

in its curves, made its nearest approach to the shore. Then Bob's legs were everywhere around the bay, in it, and out of it. The other boys watched the fish, which Alex and Crissy recognized now as a dogfish, without the least idea of what Bob's intentions were. They had all deserted the trap because Alex, with a sudden gleam of intelligence, had said: "There 'll be plenty of time to h'ist the planks after he swims through! Let 's watch him till he does it; you could see him better if ye 'd stop rarin' an' anchor in one spot, Bob!"

But Bob was intent upon his own enterprise, and nobody was anxious about him except Zanzibar, who raced after him in every direction, whining at him piteously, and barking loudly at the fish. Ranna knew what he was after. She was the only one who did, and she danced with glee. She knew nothing of fear except what actual experience had taught her. One day when Mr. Parker, the gentleman who owned the prettiest of the five summer cottages in Nipsit, was driving his family through the village with his pair of fast, black horses, Ranna, left alone for a minute, had walked across the road under their very noses. It took all Mr. Parker's strength and skill to rein in the animals, who reared and plunged frightfully

while the little mute walked leisurely across their path. Mrs. Parker's scream brought Shirley, white with terror, to his sister's side; but Ranna, feeling the horses' breath upon her head, had only looked up at them and smiled gently into their faces. A horse had never hurt the child — why should she be startled by one, or any number of them? The day when she had been lost in the woods, it was not a wild Indian, as Challey and Bob had fully persuaded themselves it was, that had frightened her; it was a frog which had jumped into her lap; and now, while she was wholly unmoved by the plunging horses, she would have been beside herself with terror at the sight of one poor, wee little frog! So, she was not a bit afraid of the huge dogfish, but hoped with all her heart that Bob would catch him; and she knew that was what he was after, knee-deep in the water, where at every sweep the creature came nearer.

Now it was coming!

"Come out, Bob!" shouted Challey, uselessly, for the twentieth time. Here it comes! Bob made no sound, for fear of scaring it away. Nearer this time, nearer — *here* it is! And Bob, with a frantic lunge, grabs it by the tail!

Ah, what a shriek! For, with the touch of his hands, the animal gave a turn and buried his teeth in Bob's leg! *One* shriek? Shriek upon shriek from poor little Bob for an instant, as he came staggering out of the water, the blood streaming from his leg. Challey, gasping, too frightened to scream, was helping him on one side, while Alex was on the other, and they sat him down on the grass. Every boy was pale with fright. Challey thought Bob was hurt unto death!

"Tie it up! How shall we tie it up?" he cried pitifully, pulling out his small handkerchief for the purpose. The wound was dreadful, and there was the blood streaming and only three mites of handkerchiefs among all the boys. "Ranna! maybe Ranna 's got one!" thought Challey.

Poor little Ranna! She did not know what all the excitement was about. The boys had crowded around Bob so quickly that she had not caught sight of the wound or the blood. She had only seen the fish swim away, was disappointed, and began looking for her nest again. Challey now ran to her, caught her by the hand, drew her quickly over to Bob, showing her a handkerchief, and pointing first to her pocket and then to his leg.

She looked, innocently, where he pointed; her eyes caught sight of the wound and the blood, and her face grew ghastly pale in an instant. Then she turned sick and faint, and threw herself upon the ground, uttering that piteous wail of hers.

Challey could not attend to her — Bob was bleeding to death! He began with trembling hands to try to stop the blood with the miserable little handkerchiefs. Ranna was too much frightened to lie still. In an instant she was up again, wailing loudly, her face all drawn with horror, looking towards Bob. Ha! she saw what Challey was doing! Quicker than thought, she saw everything and knew that he and Alex were trying to bind Bob's leg. The small handkerchiefs were already saturated with the blood that was sickening — oh, so sickening to her! Anything — *anything* to cover up the dreadful sight! That was Ranna's instinct, as she clutched at her muslin frock. Its touch was enough for her quick wit, and in a moment she was struggling to get it off, frantic in her dumb appeal for help. Challey — any of them might have understood her then, but it was Challey who undid the buttons and had the dress off in a minute. Alex bound it around the poor little leg as

well as he could, for it was clumsy to manage, and they never thought of tearing it.

Then Challey sat down by his little brother and put his arm around him. "You — you need n't cr-cry, Challey! I do-don't *b'lieve* I 'm k-k-killed — am I?"

"No! no! no!" screamed all the boys at once, while the tears rolled most piteously down the face of Challey, who was less certain.

"What 's Ranna doing now?" cried Crissy, pointing to where she had run out on a grassy point and was waving both arms frantically over her head, sending her long, monotonous cries out over the water.

Ah! It was Captain Pepper's boat! Tacking far out because of the shoals; but he was there and would surely come to them.

"Captain Pepper! Captain Pepper!" screamed Jim's shrill voice as he ran to join the shivering and wailing Ranna. Every boy watched the boat until it reached the old pier. Certainly, in all the voyages he had ever made, the captain was never more astonished than he was by the sight of Ranna in her petticoats, little Jim trying to put his jacket on her, and the bundle which the others were telling him was Bob's leg!

When the wind blows softly, the water acts

as a sounding-board and carries the voice far and clearly. Away out, before he tacked for the narrow channel which he called a "guzzle," Captain Pepper had heard Ranna's wail, like the cry of a screech-owl at night, from the end of the grassy point. As he steered and came nearer he saw her flinging her arms about in greater excitement than he had ever known her to be in before. It was of no use for Jim to try to get his jacket on her. Her horror at the sight of Bob's wound threw her into a state of wild distress, and when the captain arrived she was almost in hysterics. She ran to and fro between the old pier, where the captain moored his boat, and the group of boys gathered on the beach around Bob, in anguish so much greater because she had no vent for it in speech, that it was impossible to attend to Bob at all until she was quieted. It was thoughtful Challey who accomplished this. The moment the captain approached, with the panic-stricken child clinging to his hands, his knees, any part of him, Challey cried: "Come here; this side, Capt'm Pepper! *I*'ll take care of Ranna, so *you* can take care of Bob!" and he had forcibly taken Ranna's little bare arms from around the captain and drawn her away. Then, while the captain ex-

amined and rebound Bob's leg, Challey gave himself to the task of soothing the little mute, drawing her farther and farther away toward the boat. With his touch the extravagance of her fright subsided, and when Captain Pepper came, carrying Bob in his arms, Challey had coaxed her to put Jim's jacket on at last, and she was only beating her hands together and moaning.

Bob was all right now, and, with his arms tight around Captain Pepper's neck, there was no fear of his dying.

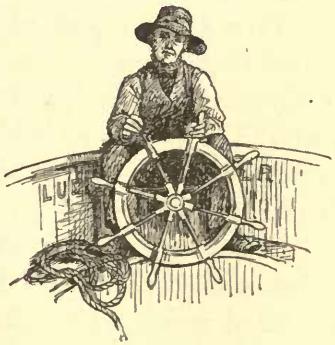
"I ain't going to die at all, Challey!" he called, as soon as he was within hearing of his brother. "And Cap'm Pepper says my leg ain't bitten off, either; there 's plenty of it left for it to — to hitch on by!"

That was an immense relief to little Jim Holburn, who had confidently expected to see Bob's leg drop off when the captain lifted him from the ground.

The reaction from fright and anxiety made the boys intensely happy now. By and by, when Bob lay on a bed made for him on one of the seats, with Challey sitting on a box beside him, and they told the captain how the accident had happened, Bob was feeling not at all like a martyr, but like a hero who might even be envied.

"I tell you what, Challey," he said, exulting in the experience, "there won't be any of the boys at school that 'll have anything like *this leg* to tell about! This is heaps more wonderful than Fred Wellington's yachts an' things!"

But all the cheerfulness that had returned to the boys could not drive away the dazed, frightened look from little Ranna's face. She sat pale and silent all the way home, and nobody could coax the shadow of a smile from her.



VII.

THE UTTER USELESSNESS OF TRYING TO CONVINCE MOLLY DOLAN THAT A DOGFISH IS NOT A WHALE.

CAPTAIN PEPPER was familiar with every book on the shelves of the Nipsit Library, except those in the "Fiction" department. He had traveled over a great part of the world's waters, had met Stanley on the coast of Africa, Agassiz on the coast of Brazil, and many other great men who liked to talk with him quite as much as he did with them, and he said he knew "too much of real life to care about what was made up." Facts were strange enough for him and more interesting than fiction. But, although so fond of reading, he had the strongest dislike to writing. His active occupations by day were out of all harmony with pen and ink. After he had dressed Bob's wound properly with a slice of fresh pork, and supper was over with, he considered it an easier matter to

hunt up somebody who was going to Boston the next morning and would undertake to have a personal interview with Mr. Chezzle and tell him all about it, than to write even a meagre account of the accident. Mrs. Tuckit, who came to sit with Bob while he was absent, suggested that he might telegraph; but the captain had an unconquerable objection to sending messages in that way.

"No," he said, "I 'm goin' to do ez I 'd be done by. *I* was n't ever telegraphed to by anybody, an' I hope I won't be. I don't know any kind o' news that spiles by keepin' a spell. Telegraphs don't make good news any better, and the only thing they do to bad news is to scare a man out of his senses 'fore they tell it to him! I 'll look round and see who 's going by the early coach; that 's the best tack to take."

After a short search he found Captain Jones, who not only intended to take the earliest train from West Barnstable for Boston, but made the practical suggestion that he should accompany Captain Pepper home and see Bob for himself, and that they might stop on the way to get Dr. Skorry to join them, that the most satisfactory report possible might be conveyed to Mr. Chezzle. His forethought spared that gentleman more anxiety than a little, for

young Crissy accompanied his father, and his embellishments to the story of the disaster left poor Bob with very little of a leg to stand upon. As an eye-witness, Crissy's testimony, if considered by itself, would have made Mr. Chezzle's hair stand on end with horror.

Although spared any serious alarm, Mr. Chezzle decided, however, that he would go to Nipsit by the afternoon train and take Molly Dolan with him. He dispatched a note to her at once, directing her to go to his room, pack a bag for him, and to meet him herself, if possible, at the station. When he reached there, hot and breathless from hurry and hard work, there was Molly already in the car, with Mr. Chezzle's valise and more bundles than he could count. Her face was fiery red, and her eyelids much swollen from crying.

"Why, Molly! Molly!" said Mr. Chezzle, kindly, taking a seat beside her. "It is n't so bad as that! Captain Jones has seen fish-bites a great deal worse, and he says little Bob will do finely."

But Molly only shook with sobs, and groaned into her handkerchief: "Oh, that whale! that wha-a-le!"

"But it was n't a whale," said Mr. Chezzle; "it was only a" —

"Don't be tellin' me that, Mr. Chizzle-if-ye-plaze-sir with a contrivance to make me moind aisy!" said Molly, mournfully. "It 's thim sa-captins don't think anny more o' whales than yersilf does of a hop-toad. An' it 's Bob the blesséd chilt that 'd walk down the crathur's troat he wud, as aisy as he 'd run down the back stairs after his rubber ball! Oh, *where* was Captin Pepper not to be holdin' him back from his own desthruction?" And Molly took a clean handkerchief out of her pocket for a fresh burst of tears.

"But," said Mr. Chezzle, "Captain Pepper could not imagine that Bob would dash into the water to nab a fish four times his own size by the tail! George!" he exclaimed to himself, taking off his hat to wipe his forehead, as the perspiration gathered suddenly, with a pang of apprehension as to what Bob's next inspiration might prompt him to do. But he only said mildly to Molly: "We must n't blame Captain Pep" —

"Captain *Pepper!*" she exclaimed, stiffening her back and glaring sideways at Mr. Chezzle. "*Pepper!* I 'll *pepper* him! An' it 'll be *red* pepper, wid mustard! an' vinegar! an' bilin' wather to mix 'em wid! Wait till I set eyes on him!"

Mr. Chezzle thought it best to be quiet and let Molly's wrath cool awhile. The cars bumped and whizzed along noisily for some time, and then, as she was looking out of the window quietly, he thought it safe to remark: "See what fine cranberry patches those" —

"An' where 's his *mind* gone thin?" Molly interrupted, rolling her eyes again. "Cud he take wan look at the legs o' that darlint, an' not *know* they 'd go into anny place in the wurrild the first chance they got? No — he cuddent, Mr. Chizzle-sir, no he cuddent! The bye's legs spake for thimsilves!"

So they continued their journey, Molly breaking out every little while in this way. Mr. Chezzle's patience was inexhaustible. He knew that Molly would lay down her life for his two boys, if it was necessary, and he thought she was therefore entitled to an escape-valve for her feelings. He knew, too, that it was after the manner of her wrath to expend itself in building up plans for vengeance, and to think of bitter things to say, but that the plans were never carried out or the dreadful things said.

Her imagination had never worked up so many reproaches, nevertheless, as she was determined now to heap upon Captain Pepper. However, by and by the cars jogged her into

a state of drowsiness; she snored, and Mr. Chezzle read his paper, thinking that she was "sleeping it off."

But, just as they neared their station, she roused, jerked herself upright, and said, ominously: "An' I 'll jist ask him if he 's blind not to have seen it in his legs that somethin' was comin' !" If the conductor had not cried, "West Barnstable!" she would have gone on, no doubt.

But she had to be packed into the stage-coach with all her bundles, and as Mr. Chezzle shared the front seat with the driver, she had no further opportunity for conversation.

And at last they were at Captain Pepper's gate; he was helping her out himself. Mrs. Tuckit was in the doorway, smiling and cheery, calling out that Bob was "nicely — could n't be doing better!" She had come across the road to help get supper, in case Mr. Chezzle came. The captain was carrying Molly's trunk up stairs, Challey was hugging papa who was paying the driver, Bob was calling out lustily from the sitting-room where he was propped up on the sofa, and where papa's supper was laid. Molly was hustled into the house, she did n't know how, and, the minute papa's hug was over, was down on her knees beside Bob, so

glad at the sight of his tousled hair and honest little face that her heart was full of nothing but kindliness.

With everybody talking at once, nobody understood anything for a little while, but the sight of the boys, ruddy and sunburnt, was enough. Mrs. Tuckit took Molly into the kitchen, and not only gave her her supper, but answered her questions. And when she learned that the captain had not only prepared his best room for Mr. Chezzle, but that one was ready for her too, and that she, Molly Dolan, was to be treated as a guest in "Luella's house," the last spark of her resentment vanished.

"I did n't know as anybody 'd come," said Captain Pepper; "but I thought it 'd go hard with ye to stay away, an' it would n't do any harm to have the decks cleared an' the fo'-castle ready. So make yourselves at home an' carry full sail if ye like, an' report to headquarters if everything about the riggin' ain't as it should be!"

Face to face with Captain Pepper, Molly never mentioned mustard or vinegar! He gained ground with her at once by not disputing the identity of the fish, and his own distress over the accident rendered it necessary to console *him*, and made fault-finding impossible.

Before going to bed, Molly stepped lightly to the sitting-room door where Mr. Chezzle, having seen Bob comfortably stowed away for the night, was alone.

"Whisht now, Mr. Chizzle-sir!" she said, in a whisper. "If ye plaze ye 'll not be sayin' a wurrid about anny remarks I might be afther makin' on the jarney! I 've had a conversay-shun wid him, and he 's that mild an' sinsible! he agraze wid me now, parfectly does the captin, an' he 'll not let the byes play wid the whale anny more! He 's come to it, an' he 's decided it now, that whales is dangerous coompany for young childers! Whisht now! He 's retarnin'!" And Molly was beaming as she added aloud: "An' I 'll bid yez swate drames an' a good night's rest, Mr. Chizzle an' Captain Pepper-sir!"

Molly had only one worry connected with the captain's unusual hospitality, and, anxious to express it, she urged Mrs. Tuckit to accompany her to her room, before going home. When she had closed the door carefully she invited Mrs. Tuckit to take a seat. Then, still carrying the light, she trod on tiptoe while she opened in turn every door in the room and looked cautiously to see what was behind it.

"For mercy's sake, Molly, what are you

looking for?" asked Mrs. Tuckit, after telling her where three of the doors led.

"Whisht now, Mrs. Tickles-mum, till I 'm troo, an' I 'll tell yez. An' if ye plaze what 's behint this shart one in under the slant?" Molly had to bend down to open it.

"Oh, that 's for anything; it 's the eaves-closet," answered Mrs. Tuckit. "It 's low, but it 's long and handy for brooms. Aunt Luella used to keep her piece-bags there."

"Well, I 'd fale best to lock it," said Molly, turning the button. "And this?" opening another, but she shut it immediately, exclaiming: "Och! but it 's big an' dark in there!"

"Of course; that is the back attic, and it has no plastering, only the rough beams and rafters. But I don't see what you care so much for," said Mrs. Tuckit, a little tried by Molly's curiosity, and rising to go.

"Oh, wait jist a minute longer an' I 'll tell ye now, Mrs. Tickles-mum," said Molly, setting the candle on a corner of the high, narrow mantelpiece. "It 's only — only — I fale jist a wakeness come over me whin I think of — of — of Captin Pepper's — his — *you* know — he 's always talkin' about her — his wife that was!"

"O Molly! Molly! What are you afraid of?" said Mrs. Tuckit, laughing. "Ghosts?"

"Oh no — no!" cried Molly. "But he 's that par-tickerlar, an' he 's that fatiguin'-like, tellin' jist how 'Lewella' did this an' 'Lewella' did that! And Lewella, she 's that contínyal, that I fale mesilf onaisy for fear she might be lookin' on if I — if I did annything the wrong way like!"

Molly's tone and manner were so honestly anxious that Mrs. Tuckit said cheerfully: "Oh, you need not worry a single minute, Molly. Luella Pepper was a good woman. She never made a soul uncomfortable in her lifetime. And you are so neat and careful, Molly, that I told Captain Pepper, when he got it into his head that you 'd be likely to come and he 'd have a room ready for you; I said: 'Uncle Zenas, Molly is a girl after Aunt Luella's own heart. *Her* ways 'll be Luella's ways — you see if they won't.' And you know you 've been coming to Nipsit a good many summers, Molly, with Mr. Chezzle's family, and I know you pretty well. So go to bed, and go to sleep, and don't worry a mite. Uncle Zenas needs the help, now Bob is laid up. He has let me help him since yesterday for the first time since Aunt Luella died, and I was thankful when I saw you get out of the coach, for you can save him heaps

of work and trouble." Molly's face cleared more and more as Mrs. Tuckit spoke, and she bade her a serene good-night.

"All the same," she said to herself, "I 'll set the candle on the table beside me, so I can blow it out afther I 'm safe in the bed!" But she was a little taken aback when she had tied on her nightcap, and was ready to get into bed, by the height she was expected to climb, the "feather-tick" on top of the mattress being about on a level with her waist.

"How a shart woman like me is goin' to rise to that!" she said. "Missus Lewella must a' been a tahl one!"

VIII.

HOW MARIA BOUNCED INTO THE LITTLE OFFICE AND TOOK A DARK GENTLEMAN INTO HER CONFIDENCE.

ONE bright morning at Meaux, Maria Penroy was pushing an elegant toy carriage around the garden, airing her precious doll, Marguérite Helène, and a new pink parasol. She was enjoying immensely the additional dignity which the parasol seemed to give her, and that, combined with the motherly solicitude she was full of for the doll, made the occasion perfect for about ten minutes. Then the kitten, coming out from under the piazza, recognized her favorite playthings, Maria's dainty heels, and immediately hid behind a flower-pot to lie in wait for them. At the same moment Dr. Frédiqueue descended from his buggy at the end of the path. Maria, unconscious and happy, was studying the best pose for the parasol, when the kitten's opportunity came, and

she seized one of the heels. Maria gave a leap, cried out, and allowed the parasol to bounce recklessly into the eyes of Marguérite. She might have managed the situation, however, if she had not caught sight of Dr. Frédiqueue rapidly walking towards her. She at once abandoned her heels to the kitten, whose teeth were sharp, turned suddenly, bumped and bounced the carriage, parasol, doll, kitten, and herself into the first refuge through an open door at her side. Then she shut the door with a bang, and jumped upon a window-seat to peep through the glass in order to see if Dr. Frédiqueue had perceived and was following her, not noticing that Marguérite and the parasol had rolled upon the floor together. But, before she had a chance to satisfy herself concerning the objectionable doctor, she saw a shadow move, close beside her, and beheld the grim face of a tall, dark man looking sharply at her. That was a climax to her power of endurance. She gave a gasp and screamed.

"Don't be frightened, my child!" said the gentleman, in a fine, gentle voice. "See! I think no harm is done. The point of the parasol has become entangled in her pretty hair, so" — He had removed it and gravely seated the doll against some books on his writing-

table. "She is quite composed now; she only cried out because of the pain!"

"Ah!" said Maria, smiling into the dark face, with intense relief. "It was *I* screamed. Marguérite did not; you know that, Monsieur!"

"Yes?" asked the grave voice. "But she would like her curls smoothed again, no doubt. I would do it, if I knew how; but I have no little girl to teach me." He leaned back in his chair and folded his hands quietly on the table.

"Oh!" said Maria, stepping down from the window-seat and going to her doll. "What a pity that is, Monsieur! Because you are polite to dolls — so very polite. But Monsieur le Docteur Frédiqueue! *He* is not polite — not at all polite to my Marguérite! He has called my Marguérite a thing that is foolish! Think of that! So I run to hide myself when he comes near. May I stay in here, Monsieur, until *le Docteur* Frédiqueue goes away? I will sit on the window-seat so my little cat shall not bite my feet." Maria was stooping to rub her suffering ankles, while she continued: "And I will not speak at all, so you can write. Often my chère Tante writes long, long times, and I do not speak one word, only to Marguérite."

"I do not wish to write now, my little girl,"

said the gentleman. "You may sit in this easy-chair, if you like, and we will give your kitten something else to play with. So — she has found the curtain-tassel. And what do you do while your aunt is writing?"

Maria wheeled the chair a little nearer the table, curled herself up in it comfortably with her doll, and proceeded to give her new friend the details of her life with a summary of the perfections of her aunt and the two cousins in America.

"And I wish I could write fast like chère Tante! Then I would make big letters to send to my cousins Shallee and Pob. But it is much hard work to write one little small letter!" and she heaved a sigh.

"But you shall write as long ones as you choose, my child," said her friend. "See" — drawing some paper towards him and dipping a pen into the ink — "you may tell me what to say, and I will write it down for you, word for word, just as you say it."

"Ah! what fun that will be!" cried Maria, springing to her feet to stand close to the table upon which she rested her folded arms. "But," she added, looking suddenly anxious, "my cousins cannot read French words at all!"

"We will have it in English, then," said the gentleman. "Begin!"

"O that is fine think!" she cried, breaking out into her funny English; "an' you will make a lettre for me *more* pig than chère Tante's. My cousins they shall haf one lettre fot is pig, pig, pigger zan she kent rrrite. An' I keep zat a secrette. You fill not tell notings to ma tante, Monsieur?" she asked anxiously. Her friend promised, and she continued her dictation in such a droll mixture of French, English, and "sailore words," that she required considerable help. But her amanuensis tried to preserve the general character of what she said.

"My fine cousins," she dictated, "I luf not Monsieur le Docteur Frédiqueue. He iss not polite to my Marguérite and I luf not more M. le Docteur De la Quille. But all the house luf Tante Helène. She iss mine. She make my Marguérite much robes. My papa luf my goot toll Marguérite Helène Sche-zelle Penneroi ant he gif me twenty francs to puy for her a punk. But the clerks in the stores they laugh ant they are like le Docteur Frédiqueue. They are not polite when they know not what is *punk*. I tell to Papa how they laugh, and he look *sévère*. He say they are much dull that

they know not sailore words. And it make him feel sad that they laugh at me. He put the blanket to cover his face and he shake. He tell me it is the chill — my poor papa! If my Papa could to go with me to the Palais Royale he tell me he will say to the clerks and to Monsieur le propriétaire, 'Beelay!' I know not that word. Papa say they will be frighten and fear to speak and laugh if they hear 'Belay!' Papa like me to learn English, so he tell me many words. I read to him the lettres what you send to my Tante. He tell me you are 'fine, leetle shaps.' I ask him what is 'shaps,' an' he tell me it mean to say 'sha-veurs.' My papa tell me fine think. He tell me I go with Suzanne to-morrow to Paris to buy fine ships for my nice leetle sha-veurs." Maria went on dictating for some time longer until she heard Suzanne's voice calling her. Then it was necessary to settle the doll again in its carriage and leave the cosy little office.

"But I will come again to-morrow morning, Monsieur, to finish my letter," she called, after getting once more outside of the door. "And my little cat shall stay there sleeping in your window until" — here she came back to say quite confidentially — "until M. le Docteur

shall go away. Then, put her out, if you please, Monsieur, because it will not matter so much if she runs to catch *his* feet with her little teeth!" And Maria hurried away without another word.

During her short visit she and the dark gentleman had become intimate friends, much to the wonder of Suzanne, who asked her "how in the world she had dared to venture into that dismal hole of a room where nobody ever went, and where the awful countenance of Monsieur le Secrétaire d'Etat was enough to frighten a brigand!"

But Maria was not communicative, for the moment she told Suzanne she had been hiding from Dr. Frédiqueue, the maid cried out in dismay at the thought of anybody running away from such a charming and amiable gentleman.

At the same moment the dark gentleman, watching them from the office window, was wondering whether the doctor's rude manners to Maria's doll were enough to account for the child's aversion.

IX.

SHOWS HOW WELL A LITTLE GIRL CAN SELECT BOATS IN PARIS FOR BOYS IN AMERICA.

From Mrs. Chezzle's Journal.

JULY 17. The two doctors asked me to meet them this A. M. in the library and made so much fuss about a communication which they had to make to me that I prepared my mind for something tremendous. When, after working up my imagination to the highest pitch, they informed me only that my brother had made his will, I was indignant and enjoyed provoking them a little by my coolness.

"Very well; it would be no business of mine if he made forty," I said. But they went on to say that he had not signed the will, and they wanted me to get him to do it. I flared a little when they began to hint at the misfortune which it might be to *me*, "*in case* Monsieur may have made some provision for

his devoted sister." I broke out at once and let them know that an American woman was capable of being disinterested. I mentioned "my husband" with great dignity several times, said *he* was able and glad to support me, that I was here to think of the *life*, not the death of my brother, and refused to have anything to do with his will. But they made me feel ashamed of my anger in two minutes, and I found that they thought Tom had the matter on his mind, and that it was the cause of his restless nights. They praised "the noble independence of Madame and her beautiful, self-sacrificing devotion to her brother." They too, they said, had not the remotest interest in the disposition of Monsieur's wealth; it was "simply to obtain sleep and rest for his poor exhausted frame that they wished him to sign his will." They said they had not failed to perceive how great was my influence over "Monsieur Pennaroi," and that it was becoming stronger every day. Tom had asked them to witness the will, it seems, so really it is more their business than mine, and I am sorry I was so hasty. Of course I apologized and promised to seize the first opportunity to obtain the signature, if I could; and they offered to come at once, on a message from me, to witness it.

They are most kind, for they must have an immense practice, and an extra visit to the house is always difficult for them to arrange. I asked if it would not be best for my brother to see his lawyers, but they objected seriously and gave their reasons. They declared that Messrs. Roubaix and Duvergne had nearly caused Tom's death, when they had drawn up his will, by their violent opposition to his disposal of his property. "They made an effort which was almost superhuman," said M. De la Quille, "to thwart the generous and benevolent designs of our noble patient. But we came to his rescue. We convinced him that his lawyers, in their study how to obtain the largest possible revenue from his property and that of other estates, had become hardened against the claims of humanity! They could not understand the great love of humanity in the soul of such a man as Madame Shezelle's brother!" etc., etc. Then they went on to say that, but for the interference of these lawyers, the will would have been signed long ago. And they made no attempt to conceal from me that they had used their influence with Tom to estrange him as much as possible from Messrs. Roubaix and Duvergne. So now I understand why the doctors have forbidden us to

tell Tom how often M. Duvergne calls to inquire about him.

Two other gentlemen come to see him and have long interviews without doing him the least harm. They look clerical and are missionaries. Tom told me one day that they were giving their lives to a very noble purpose, — the establishment of some kind of colony in the island of Madagascar, — something to encourage education among the natives. I know you 'll laugh at that; but perhaps, if I understood more about it, you would not.

July 18. Tom has Maria with him half the time. She is a darling child — innocent and winning. He has talked so oddly to her about his death that I think she has an unconscious idea that he can arrange to go to heaven or not, as he pleases. But I think she would be as completely overwhelmed by the actual event as if she had never heard it hinted at. Nothing pleases her so much as the children's letters. She studies all their "sailore talk," and takes pride in bringing it out on all occasions. And Tom takes a mischievous delight in making her repeat it to him. Fancy her, with her refined, delicate manner, asking an exquisite French clerk to show her a "bunk" for her doll! She gave up her search for a

"torshent," as the storekeepers invariably produced dish-toweling. And now I expect her to bring out "Belay!" under the most awkward circumstances. That contamination comes direct from Tom — *not* from our precious boys.

July 22. I have a strange mixture of things to tell you. In the first place, Tom is going to send our boys two enormous toy boats, the like of which they have never seen. Oh, if I could see their dear faces when Captain Pepper opens the boxes! Tom ordered Susanne to take Maria to the largest toy store in Paris and allow her to select exactly what she wanted. I was sitting in his room last evening when the child opened the door, and the boats were brought in for Tom to see. He had told Maria to order them sent here so that Antoine, who is a universal genius and a connoisseur in boats, might inspect and box them up with especial care. You will not understand my dismay until you see the size of them. I suggested having them sailed over to America by a couple of skippers as the easiest way to send them. But the boats surprised me less than Tom, who, propped up in bed, laughed until I was afraid he would have hysteria. I thought, of course, that the matter would be treated as

a joke and the gigantic toys returned to the store. But Tom silenced me, insisting that he and Maria understood each other perfectly. He told her that she was a capital shopper, and since he found he could rely upon her, that he would give her further commissions. He demanded paper and pencil, and wrote off a list of things which Antoine is to obtain, or make, and put into the boxes. He grew so excited that he forgot the pillows behind him, sat up straight, and carried on so with Maria that he had her skipping all over the room, in peals of laughter. It alarmed me, but I was helpless. I tried to make him see the absurdity of sending such extravagant gifts to our little innocent boys, who think shingles pointed at one end, with sticks for masts, perfectly satisfactory ships. I begged him to lie down and let Maria go to bed, warned him that he would not sleep a wink, etc., etc. But not a word would he reply to me except 'Gammon!'"

"Tom! Tom dear!" I urged, for I was really worried; "remember the doctors' orders!"

"I will!" he said; "thank you for reminding me. You can tell them 'Gammon!' also." Then he called Maria to his side and said, "Maria, I can depend upon you to do exactly what I ask you, my child?"

"Oui, papa," she said, very attentive immediately.

"Very well," he said, seriously. "Then I want you to be very polite indeed to messieurs les docteurs, and to tell M. Frédiqueue that papa desires you to say to him 'Gammon!' Can you say that?"

"Oui, papa, certainement," she answered. "I will say it so: 'M. le Docteur Frédiqueue, mon papa vous présent ses compliments, et désire que je vous dise, Ga-monne!'"

"That is it, exactly, my darling!" cried Tom. "And I want you to tell M. De la Quille that papa desires you to say to him, 'Gammon and spinach!' Let me hear you repeat that."

"Ga-monne et spee-nadge!" repeated Maria, sweetly.

"That is near enough, dear," said Tom, without a smile. "Try 'spinach' once more."

And the scamp actually amused himself with the child's struggles to say the word, which was so difficult for her that she fairly gnashed her teeth over it.

The worst of it is that Maria is quite incapable of taking a joke. I told her afterwards that her father only meant a little pleasantry; but she looked up at me with surprise, and said

so earnestly, "Oh no, chère Tante! He was quite serious, I am *sure!*" that I said no more. My only comfort is that the gentlemen will not understand the message, and if they ask Tom for an explanation, he will have his own to give.

But his behavior last evening, followed as it was by an excellent night and a demand for eggs and toast for breakfast, lead me not only to think that he is decidedly better, but to wonder whether it is so certain, after all, that he is going to die. In any case, it deprived me of an occasion to broach to him the subject of the will. It also decided me to adopt a new course. Instead of confiding to the doctors every circumstance, I am going to quietly observe Tom by myself. I am the more determined because when I inquired of Dr. Frédiqueue this morning how he found his patient, he answered: "No worse *perhaps!* Madame, by keeping him quiet and free from all excitement, composes his nerves somewhat, but he grows weaker — much weaker!" And he ordered no nourishment except toast-water and milk. I began to wonder whether, after all, the doctors understood Tom's case.

July 23. Tom develops new peculiarities every day. He has refused to take any medi-

cine for a week past except from Maria. Antoine, his attendant, prepares every dose at the appointed time and leaves it on the mantelshelf. Tom says quietly: "I will take it when Mlle. Maria comes." He also takes all his nourishment from her, and will receive it from no one else.

I broached the subject of the will this morning, and was surprised to find Tom rather pleased to talk about it. We had really the longest and most satisfactory conversation we have had at all, and I learned more about his past life than I have ever known before. He said he owed his prosperity to nobody but Dame Fortune herself. It was simple luck, nothing else; he had tumbled into it. A friend of his, a poor fellow who never had any luck in his life, was on the verge of ruin and wanted to sell a lot of land in Australia. Tom bought it out of sheer friendship, without ever having seen it. After a year or two, needing money to put into his business, he bethought himself of the land, and went out to look at it, leaving Maria with her nurse in Paris. His wife was not living. Tom speaks of his wife with great feeling and loved her devotedly.

When he reached Australia he learned that his friend had died, and that the land covered

valuable mines. I liked Tom's way of telling about it. He said:

"I don't care for money, Helen. I believe it has caused me more pain to think that Maria's mother never had the benefit of my wealth, and that Peters, poor old fellow! never knew what he parted with in selling me that land, to say nothing of father and mother — I believe all that has given me more pain, so far, than the money has pleasure. I had more real fun in buying your boys those boats than *money* ever gave me before."

"But, Tom," I said, "your wife — my sister" He reached for my hand and kissed it as if it might have been the queen's.

"Yes?" he said softly. "What about her?"

"You took good care of her; she never *suffered* for money" —

"No, thank God! not after I found her!" he cried. "I earned enough to give her and our baby all they ever wanted, and it was wealth and luxury to her. We paid our bills."

Well, he went on for a long time, and told me how he had had dreamy plans about sending gifts home.

"But father and mother had gone," he said; "and to tell the truth, little sister, I have been indifferent to everything and everybody except

Maria. I knew you were somewhere, but I did not know what kind of a woman you had turned out, and I did n't know Chezzle's circumstances, and" —

Of course I would n't let him go into explanations why he had not sent me money; so I interrupted him, and I know I was as red in the face as little Bob gets when he is excited. "Well, Chezzle is a high and mighty character, Tom," I cried, "and the most obstinately independent man that ever was born under the American flag. Nothing in the world would make him madder than to suppose he could not support his wife and children without *any*body's help, and he has only one fault in his whole being, — he works too hard, and won't take comfort as he ought, in the belief that if a man does his best without shirking, and is content and proud because he is able to make an honest living — no matter how small it is — and John is all that — why" —

I stopped because I could n't think fast enough of the words I wanted. Tom had risen on his elbow and reached again for my hand, exclaiming:

"Why what, little sister?"

"Why," I cried, "it is *good* for a woman, and for children too, to make sacrifices some-

times! And if a man's work in the world is as thoroughly and bravely done as John Chezzle's is, I'm not afraid of *any* future, and my boys will never be, either!"

Tom put his hand on my head an instant, and said quietly: "That is the true belief, little woman — true to the core! And it is fun to see you warm up all into a blaze of glory over your Chezzle and your boys!"

The thought of the boys turned the conversation back to the boats, and soon I was my cool self again. Presently I said: "But all this is a thousand miles away from your will, Tom. Why can't I get it out for you this minute and have it ready when the doctor comes?"

"Bother the doctor!" he cried; but, controlling himself, he said: "There is n't so much hurry; I may live some time yet. But I *do* mean to sign the thing before long. I may as well tell you, Ellen, as I shall want you for one of the witnesses, that I have decided to leave a good deal of my property to charity. The gentlemen who were here last night — those missionaries, you know — are devoting their lives to the cause of education in Madagascar, and my will, when I am gone, will set the Colony upon its legs. It would be fun to see

the thing accomplished, and sometimes I wonder whether — if my decline is to be dragged on interminably — a deed of gift would not be better."

He asked my advice, and I urged him to let me send for one of his lawyers immediately and have the matter settled, saying that I thought a deed of gift, under the circumstances, would be much better than a will. Maria came in, unfortunately, or the thing might have been attended to then and there, for he was in the mood for action, decidedly. He asked me, however, to explain his change of mind to Dr. Frédiqueue.

He was radiant! He said a deed of gift would "settle the mind of Monsieur into a state of much better repose." He "hoped my brother would allow me to send for the lawyers to-morrow. But he wished seriously that M. Pennaroi would employ different ones because these Messieurs Roubaix and Duvergne are so very aggressive and disturbing to his sensitive nature."

Really, Jack, I don't understand your last postscript. For the doctors seem honestly interested and anxious for Tom's welfare, although I am beginning to distrust their professional skill. They think to-day that they have discovered "a false action about his heart."

Mrs. Chezzle opened her husband's letter to read the postscript once more. "Look a little harder," he wrote, "with those great, honest eyes of yours — Challey's are exactly like them, my dear — at your brother's excellent doctors; and I think, if you have the opportunity, you will do well to make the acquaintance of the lawyers, 'Messrs. Gruffit and Crusty,' as you call them."

"Why," said Mrs. Chezzle to herself, as she locked her desk. "I had scarcely mentioned the lawyers to him when he wrote that, and I certainly had not questioned the skill of the doctors! But I have no objection to seeing either of the distinguished legal gentlemen. They cannot hurt *me!* Whatever opinion you have of my eyes, Mr. Jack, you evidently think your own are the sharpest!"

X.

THE ANXIETY OF TWO MISSIONARIES AND THE DOCTORS IN ATTENDANCE UPON MR. PENROY TO GET THAT GENTLEMAN TO SIGN A DEED OF GIFT FOR THE BENEFIT OF A SCHEME TO RAISE THE STANDARD OF EDUCATION IN THE ISLAND OF MADAGASCAR.

JULY 26. I have had my first difficulty with the servants. The cook has been complaining to me of Antoine. He is Tom's chief nurse and attendant, as good-natured a young fellow as ever lived, but is spoiled, no doubt, by Tom's unbounded confidence and indulgence. He is tall, hearty-looking, with the plainest of features, which are redeemed by merry brown eyes and a most agreeable smile. Tom sends orders by him right and left, and will receive a suggestion from him more readily than from any one. So, if Antoine chose to

make trouble, he could do it so easily that, although I can't help liking the fellow and bestowing my good will upon him, I must, in reason, sympathize with the cook. Her complaint is that he gives her no end of trouble by ordering things at the most unheard-of hours. Roast chicken, beefsteak, soup, oysters, delicacies of every kind. She says he has been, until lately, a moderate eater, but that he has become all of a sudden a prodigious gourmand. Added to the annoyance of this, he orders all these things sent up-stairs to his room, — a small one next to Tom's bedroom, — and the other servants, to state it mildly, do not enjoy waiting upon him. I happened to be in the kitchen this morning when Claudine, the waitress, put her head in at the door and, not knowing I was there, announced in a tone of high disdain: "Mme. Madeleine, you will send up at ten o'clock precisely an omelette soufflée à la Colombine for M. le Duc D'Antoine!" And Mme. Madeleine's nose went up in the air accordingly, as she said to me: "Vous voyez, Madame?"

I smoothed her feathers by telling her that I thought, while M. Penroy continued so ill, it would be best to serve "M. le Duc" with patience, and that I would help her, if I could

discover a way. She was so pleased at my adopting Claudine's title for Antoine that I think it softened her grumble considerably for that time. I will talk with Tom some day about it, but he takes such comfort in Antoine that I shall let the matter alone, at least for awhile.

July 27. I spoke to Tom again about signing his deed. The missionaries come oftener than ever, and, to tell the truth, I don't like them. I have been in the room several times when they were visiting Tom, and there is something about them which I distrust. They talk so loud, and so fast too, that it puts me out of breath to listen — or try to. I should think they would be very exhausting to Tom. I hinted as much to Dr. Frédiqueue, but he exclaimed at once that I was mistaken in them altogether. Their visits, he said, were "of the most gratifying nature. Monsieur can only profit by conversing with them. They calm his nerves. They take him out of himself. Their gentle, soothing influence is of incomparable benefit to my noble patient!" etc., etc.

Now, Jack, if you could see them at work with their influence, you would call it something besides soothing or gentle! They are wiry little men, with anxious, nervous expressions, and a vivacity of manner which enforces the

whole attention. They enter Tom's room, to begin with, as if they had more business to accomplish than any six ordinary men ought to have. They draw up their chairs near the foot of the bed; one rubs his knees with his skinny hands, and the other wipes his bald head with an enormous yellow silk pocket-handkerchief. One of them has thin, straight eyebrows, low cheek-bones, thin lips, and a red nose; he wears blue glasses so that I can't see his eyes. The other has no eyebrows at all, little beads of near-sighted eyes which are continually winking and blinking, a long, thin nose, long upper lip, and retreating chin. They neither of them sit still a minute. Tom says: "Good-morning, gentlemen. How does the mission progress?" Then they "let fly!" Excuse the slang, but they do it! They begin to talk so fast that I can only catch a phrase here and there. It is all in French, of course, and Tom is master of it. If one stops to take breath, the other takes up the talk, and — how *do* they do it? Occasionally one takes out a note-book and dots down memoranda. Tom cannot get a word in edgeways unless they ask him about his deed. I have gathered this much — that they are as pleased as the doctors at the thought of a deed of gift, and most anxious to

secure it. I wish Tom would sign the everlasting thing and be done with it.

You advise me to look at the doctors with my "honest eyes" (thank you!) but, I assure you, these "brothers" give them more work. I *am* beginning to doubt the doctors' skill, as physicians, but I do not distrust them as I do "the Madagascarites." Maria, however, has taken such a dislike to the doctors, that she is actually miserable in their presence. I have persuaded Tom to give her no more messages for them, and would keep her out of their company if it did not increase her discomfort to have them with either Tom or me alone. She follows me, when I go to the library to speak to them, and watches them as if she were a little cat.

Tom will not fix the time for the signing of the deed, but consented to my writing to the lawyers yesterday to ask them to send him a deed with blanks which he can fill in himself with whatever amount he chooses to bestow and the object to which he means to give it. Think how queer it would feel to have enough money to talk about a deed of gift! Never mind, though, Jack dear! We get more fun out of our little income than Tom does from all his wealth.

July 28. "Mr. Crusty," of the distinguished

firm of "Gruffit & Crusty," — in other words, Monsieur Duvergne, — called to see me this morning while we were at breakfast. I was obliged to keep him waiting a few minutes. Maria, always on the alert to do something for me, ran to carry him my message, and when I entered the parlor soon after, I was surprised to find her conversing with him in the most confidential and sprightly manner. There she was, with her darling Marguérite, chattering to him like a magpie, and exhibiting the doll's clothes I had made. And he, with all his solemnity, — for he is solemn rather than crusty, — appeared to be profoundly interested. When I entered, he rose, asking Maria, "And this lady is your aunt?" Maria, who in presence of the doctors is the funniest little bit of stiffness and propriety that ever you saw, left the doll in his hands, ran to meet me, and, throwing her arms around me, cried, "Yes, yes! she is my dear aunt — *mine!*" Maria's sense of possession of me gives her supreme satisfaction.

M. Duvergne is more than six feet tall and as grim a personage as I have ever seen. Iron-gray hair, iron-gray face, iron-gray clothes. Wide-open black eyes which looked straight into mine, gray side-whiskers, and a mouth so solemn that I felt a little as if he had come to pronounce

my doom! No soldier ever stood straighter. He bowed to me with dignity and remained standing until I sat down. All the time he held the doll as if it might have been a roll of parchment. Maria remained by me, caressing my hair.

"Mlle. Maria," said M. Duvergne, in French, holding up the doll in one hand and pointing to it with the other; "she is too young to understand what I wish to talk about to your aunt; will you take her out to walk a little while?"

Maria sprang to take the doll tenderly in her arms, saying, "I will hold her."

"Wait," said M. Duvergne, smiling dimly; his very smile is solemn. "Excuse me, my child, but she is so innocent, it would not be wise for you to let her listen to conversation on business."

"Oh how droll you are — like my Papa! I will take Marguérite to the garden," said Maria; and she skipped away, breaking into a fresh little song as soon as she reached the hall.

I was a little in awe of this severe-looking gentleman, but could not repress a soft cry of pleasure when he spoke to me in *English* — my own language, pure and simple!

He began at once: "You are Mr. Penroy's sister?"

"Yes, his only sister," I answered.

"Has he any brothers?"

"No; I am his nearest relative, and, in case of his death, he wishes to place his daughter in my charge. I have a husband and two little boys in America."

His questions were direct. I would not for the world have made my answers a word longer than was necessary.

We went on, he asking and I answering, until he knew all that I do about Tom, the visits of the doctors and the Madagascarites, their anxiety to get the deed signed, and everything. Then he said: "Your brother asks for a deed of gift and I have brought one, but I hope he will not use it. I hope you will persuade him to listen to reason. Whatever money he bestows upon this Colony in Madagascar, my partner and I are convinced will be wasted. He has trusted our firm with his property, and we have no right to see him throw it away without protesting. He has refused to listen to us; perhaps he will listen to his sister. In any case, it is right that you should understand. To give what he proposes to this cause is worse than ridiculous; it is wrong."

M. Duvergne was growing warm. His manner was uncompromising, and his voice had a shade of anger in it. He speaks English perfectly, his foreign accent being very slight. If he were less careful in the pronunciation of each syllable, I might easily forget that he is not my countryman. He went on, denouncing Tom's judgment for some time, until I began to get almost indignant myself. Indeed, I should have been wholly so, if I had not agreed with him, and if I had not felt positively sure, every minute, that I was listening to a man whose honesty was absolute and whose conscience was like a rock. As a lawyer, I should think he must win every case he undertakes, for I do not see how it would be possible to oppose him. He did not tell me the amount of Tom's wealth or anything whatever about it, excepting the fact that the Madagascar Colony was likely to obtain a large sum. And you and I, Jack, would consider a sum large which Tom and M. Duvergne would probably call paltry!

I could not help approving what he said, but it was unpleasant to hear Tom's wisdom ridiculed at such a rate, and I wanted to resent it. Finally, he added the one thought which it is impossible for me to endure for a moment. After assuring me that the mission — the "mad

mission," he called it — was got up for the express purpose of getting hold of Tom's money; that it was nothing but a name; that, after securing the deed of gift, the missionaries would disappear and never be heard of again; that they certainly would never be found on the island of Madagascar, educating Malagasy savages; that Mr. Penroy could never have been so imposed upon if his health had not been impaired, — after impressing me with all that, M. Duvergne said:

"And there is another consideration. Mr. Penroy has a sister and nephews whose right it is to expect" —

"No, it is n't!" I exclaimed, looking as steadily into his great black eyes as they looked into mine. "Mr. Penroy's sister cares enough for her brother to prefer his *life* to the wealth of all the mines in Australia! Mr. Penroy's sister would not be here if she were capable of expecting anything but sorrow at his death. Mr. Penroy's sister has a husband who is proud and able to support his wife and children, and who greatly prefers to teach his boys how to do honorable *work* in the world than to want a noble uncle to die so that they may get his money and grow lazy and selfish! My husband" — O Jack! I felt just then as

if you were a king — "my husband," I cried, "has more to give his wife and little boys than Mr. Penroy's wealth twice told; he has his hard-working *life* to give them, and" —

But I stopped right there. There came suddenly before me such a picture of you, so patient, always working and never grumbling, only proud because you *can* work! And, in contrast, a picture of those wretches watching around Tom's bed and hoping every day for him to die! I was too angry to say another word.

M. Duvergne was taken completely by surprise. I had been so quiet and dignified. He waited a few minutes in silence; then he spoke in a low voice, which had changed wonderfully, and was most gentle and deferential.

"Madame," he said, "I ask your pardon. I agree with you in every particular. But it is most rare to hear such sentiments expressed. I see that you are in too delicate a position to seek to influence Mr. Penroy. I will not ask you to mention the subject to him. I will also give you my word of honor — of honor, Madame — that I will not mention you in any connection whatever with this matter if you will try to obtain Mr. Penroy's consent to seeing me. If I could see him once more before — before" —

"His death?" I asked, boldly.

"Yes, Madame," answered M. Duvergne, sadly.

I said quietly: "I do not believe he is going to die; I believe he will get well!"

The quick, honest joy which suffused the lawyer's stern face, softening every line as he sprang to his feet and forgot himself completely, proved the sincerity of his interest in Tom. We talked another half hour, and I learned that M. Duvergne had only had two short interviews with Dr. Frédiqueue and none at all with Dr. De la Quille. They have, he thinks, made a point of avoiding him. He suspects, — but no matter what he suspects; we will wait. At any rate, I feel now that Tom has at least one honest friend beside myself among a nest of doubtful ones. The only thing for me to do is to persuade him to see Monsieur Duvergne, and I think I can easily do that.

So, my love, I *have* looked at the doctors with my "honest eyes," and I have made the acquaintance of M. Jean Auguste Duvergne. Now, what is going to come of it?

XI.

HOW MARIA PENROY GAVE MORE OF HER CONFIDENCE TO THE DARK GENTLEMAN AND DELIGHTED HIS SOUL THEREBY.

THE person whom Susanne had called "Monsieur le Secrétaire d'Etat" was no other than M. Jean Auguste Duvergne, the lawyer to whom Mr. Penroy had confided the management of his business affairs, and for whose convenience the room opening on the garden had been fitted up. He lived at Meaux, and, before going every day to his office in Paris, was in the habit of stopping at the little room to look over Mr. Penroy's letters, to answer or place them on file, and attend to various matters of the kind. It was necessary for him to stop an hour or two sometimes, while at others he would remain

scarcely ten minutes. Maria went, therefore, several times without finding him. Then it rained for two days, and on the third her aunt purchased for her a doll to be dressed for the little mute girl at Nipsit, and her delight in that so overshadowed her enthusiasm for letter-writing that over ten days elapsed before M. Duvergne, busy at his table by the window, saw a shadow on his paper, and, looking up, beheld outside Maria flattening her small nose against the pane and peering through one of the transparent spots in the figured glass. She entered without waiting for an invitation.

"Hush! Please do not make a noise, Monsieur!" she said, shutting the door as softly as possible, after she had wheeled the doll's carriage inside. "Marguérite has been so very ill! You do not know! And she is fast asleep; do you see?" She lifted some lace which was thrown over the carriage-top, so that M. Duvergne might satisfy himself of the fact. "Yes, I thought she would die last night!" she added, regarding M. Duvergne with a care-worn expression, and gently rolling the carriage a few inches to and fro to make Marguérite's slumber sounder still. "Yes, truly! She had the — the *action of the heart!* Think of that, Monsieur! The same that my Papa has — the action of the heart!"

"That is most serious indeed," said M. Duvergne, gravely. "Ought you not to consult the doctor?"

"Oh no, never! I will not let them see even so much as one eye of my Marguérite!" cried Maria, indignantly, shocked at the idea, and scowling so that M. Duvergne said hastily: "Oh, I mean some other wonderful physician; not either of your Papa's doctors."

"Ah yes, certainly," said Maria, glad to have M. Duvergne right himself. "I asked le Docteur Antoine, and that is why my poor child is better this morning. We gave her"—she peeped under the lace once more, and then trod on tiptoe softly to M. Duvergne's table, —"we gave her a little tooth-powder out of Papa's box, Monsieur, and it stopped her heart instantly!"

"That was the best thing possible to do, of course," said M. Duvergne. "I hope the 'action' will not return; I should be seriously alarmed if it did."

"No, I think it will not," said Maria, while she took off her hat and arranged the carriage so that she could reach it from the arm-chair upon which she hoisted herself. "But she would be worse, and I know she would die, if I let her take any of M. Frédiqueue's medicine! Only

think, Monsieur, he is not like you at all. I told him a message from Papa, and he cannot understand. And neither M. De la Quille — just because of two little English words! They do not know anything! I tell them 'Ga-monne' and 'Spee-naahdge' many time," here Maria broke into English, "but the chin of M. le Docteur Frédiqueue, it poke out — so — an' he say I haf not the words right, an' M. le Docteur De la Quille he shut the eyes up small-leetle, an' make me say it five time. Alors he tell me it make him grief que mon Papa mus' not eat the spee-naahdge à cause that will make him die! an' I know the word is not goot to *eat*, à cause I tell Papa tout ce que they say an' he tell me all pout it. Then he shake the ped with the chill. I feel so sad, I get much blanquette to put on him, an' I want Antoine to come with hot pags. But Papa tell me no — hot pags make him sick.

"Papa an' myself, we haf beaucoup plaisir. He is droll Papa. I gif to him the médecine, but he not trink it wile I look — he send me to the win'ow to see out. An' he tell me he like to know if my dinneur is goot for me an' I mus' pring to him my plate from the table. It is biff what I haf, but Papa think it is not goot for me to eat. He say I mus' leaf the

plate by his side an' tell Tante Helène the meat she gif me is not tendre — she mus' gif me some more what is goot. Chère Tante not know what that mean; she think it was much tendre. When I go back to Papa, the biff is not there. But I fin' out where is that biff! It is one pig secrette; you fill not tell it, Monsieur, to" —

"Oh, not to anybody; be sure that I will not mention it," said M. Duvergne, looking much pleased, but not daring to smile outright lest the little girl should take offense.

"Papa tell me," she was beginning again, when she broke off to exclaim, "But I will to put all the secrettes — all — *all* the secrettes in the pig lettre for mes cousins! Where is my lettre?"

"Ah, yes, it is here, Mademoiselle," said M. Duvergne, taking it from a side drawer and preparing to write. "But people do not write secrets."

"Seulement to Amérique, Monsieur!" said Maria. "Vous voyez? They go to Amérique — away, far, so they come not pack!"

So she settled down to dictate to her cousins, and M. Duvergne wrote rapidly, without further interruption than was necessary to help her express herself. When she had chattered until

she was tired she announced that Marguérite was awake, and it would be necessary to take her upstairs again immediately to get another dose of tooth-powder. She accordingly hurried away. But M. Duvergne, although considerably belated, allowed his whole face to break into smiles the moment she had disappeared, and did not leave the little room until he had read over again, with evident enjoyment, the letter she had dictated, which ran on as follows: —

"It is *Papa* wot eat that biff! an' he tell me I mus' tell Antoine to pring to him hot soup an' a small-leetle sheeken all koo-ooke. Not a papa-sheeken, an' not a maman-sheeken non plus, but nice leetle shile-sheeken. I tell Antoine an' he know all pout it. Papa say Antoine know effery think. Myself an' Papa, an' Antoine, we have high-tide-sail-ling tout ensemble. Nobody know. It is secrette we keep to make Chère Tante glad one day when we tell her to it. An' the pig, pig, fine secrette my Papa tell to me, it is that he haf the mind all shange an' he will go not to heaven — no, not at all! I fin' out many think. I fin' out he haf not the chill unner the blanquette; it is that he *laugh* all the time! An' we tell to Antoine to get from Madeleine

in the kit-chenne all thinks that is goot for Papa to eat. Madeleine, she not like that an' she think it is Antoine what eat so much. An' I fin' out when Papa send me to look through the win'ow, he throw the médecine on the small rose-tree I buy one day for him! An' I fin' out it is Antoine what is great docteur all the time! Papa tell me it is Antoine know what will make him well! An' he laugh — that M. Antoine! He laugh so much he go behint the screen. An' the docteur come not more in the morn-ning. Papa tell me one time I mus' say to the docteurs he feel too much sick, he cannot to see them. An' I tell them that they come pas si souvent. They call to me what is that I say? I am on the stair an' I call loud: 'My Papa is too much sick to see so many time Messieurs les docteurs!' Then I run fas'. They pang the door of the street an' they make much noise!"

XII.

HOW POOR LITTLE RANNA WAS NEARLY FRIGHTENED TO DEATH.

ONE of the old Nipsit skippers called Elisha Barnes's wife, Debby, "the snuggest little housewife you could find in a ride of a thousand miles," and he found nobody to disagree with him. Elisha was one of the best carpenters in the place. He had built the house they lived in while he was "waiting on" Debby, and it was his wedding gift to her. She was very proud of showing its pretty nooks and conveniences, and thought privately that her husband was a wonderful genius. They had two children: Shirley, who was seven years old, and Miranda, who was not quite five. When they knew that their baby girl was deaf, Debby cried to break her heart many times,

until one day when Elisha, coming home unexpectedly, found her at it by the child's crib.

"We have no time to grieve, little wife," he said. "The child brings a new trade, much harder than house-building, for us to learn. We 've got her *mind* to build, Debby, and the only help we shall have will be from her eyes. But the Lord has given her a wonderful pair; see, they are looking into your face now!"

"O 'Lisha!" cried Debby, turning quickly away from the child, "and who knows what she sees?" Then she wiped away her tears and looked up at her husband with a new resolution. "There!" she said, with a brave smile, "I'll try never to let her see anything she should n't in *my* face again! I 'll set to work at my trade to-day."

And Debby had worked at it so industriously that to see her and the little girl together was a beautiful sight, and it seemed as if they understood each other perfectly.

Of course some of the neighbors who did not have the work to do thought they could teach the child better, and the parents had plenty of counsel. Miss Sophia Wringer, for instance, thought '*she* knew, well enough, how that young one could be taught!' As she did not often withhold advice when she thought it was

needed, she went to Elisha's cottage one morning on purpose to instruct Deborah. A slight accident which occurred a few minutes after she arrived, opened the way for her admirably. Just as her mother had dressed her carefully in a clean gown, Ranna pulled a bowl of milk down from a table and dashed the contents all over herself. Her mother wiped up the milk and was getting out another set of clothes for the child, who was chattering and gesticulating in dismay, when Miss Wringer seized her opportunity.

"Deborah Barnes, you 're half-witted!" she exclaimed. "*I* could teach that child how to keep her hands off things. You and 'Lisha are makin' slaves of yourselves! That child can't learn nothin' 'xcept through sufferin', an' she 'd ought to be made to suffer! To look at that now! A good birch rod 'd give her a lesson she would n't forgit in a hurry, an' she 'd ought to *have* it! Laid on well, too! I 'd jest like to give it to her myself; an' you are neglectin' your dooty, you are!"

"Thank heaven I *am*, Sophia, if you call *that* duty!" said Debby, flushing with indignation, while she buttoned Ranna's gown and stooped to kiss the back of her neck.

"Well, it 's a disgrace to you not to know

better!" said Miss Wringer, getting really angry. "Look at the child! *Look* at her, without a spark o' sense o' the trouble she 's ben an' made!"

Nothing could well have added more to Miss Wringer's anger than Ranna's innocent efforts to explain the accident. She pointed to the wet clothes in a heap on the floor, mimicked her mother wiping up the milk, and smoothed her fresh gown complacently.

"Yes, indeed, *I* see ye!" said Miss Wringer. "You know what 's happened well enough, and I 'd like to show ye somethin' else that could happen, too! I know what 'd happen fast enough to my nephew, Criss Jones, if *he* done such a thing! *He* 'd suffer a spell, I ken tell ye!"

Debby was flushing more and more, but she only said: "Well, Miss Sophia, you won't have the satisfaction of seeing Ranna made to suffer; and if you 'd let Crissy alone, I don't believe he 'd be half so troublesome as he is."

"You don't know what you 're talkin' about, Deborah Barnes!" said Miss Wringer, rising and hitching up her shawl behind with her elbows. "*I* do my dooty, an' I've told you yours. I 've ben wantin' to give ye a piece o' my mind for a long time, an' now I've done it. An' I'll

say once more" — Miss Wringer's voice was rising a good deal — "once more before I go, that child can't learn without sufferin', an' she 'd ought to be made to suffer. Solomon says, 'Spare the rod and'" —

"Stop!" cried Debby, suddenly, standing before Miss Wringer. "Why do you quote Solomon and forget Jesus? How *dare* you look at that child, born into a world of dead silence, and ask me to add to the suffering she 's got to bear all her life?"

"I 've spoke my mind, Deborah Barnes, an' done my dooty; mortals can't do more than that!" said Miss Wringer, severely.

"Well, you 'd have a better mind to speak if you studied the Bible a little more," said Debby, spicily. "Maybe, if you looked hard enough, you 'd find something in it about love, and gentleness, and patience, and a little about your duty towards the young lives given you to answer for. And you 'd better" —

Miss Wringer was walking down the path to the gate like a grenadier, but Debby was standing on the doorstep, angrier than she had ever been in her life, and called out clearly: "You had better *not* speak your mind to 'Lisha, for I think *his* mind would n't be very pleasant to anybody who talked about raising a hand to his little Ranna!"

There was a trouble, not of anger, on Debby's face when Jim Holburn brought Ranna home from Gull Marsh with his jacket on. He told Mrs. Barnes, while she was changing the jacket for a dress, all about the accident to Bob Chezzle, with plenty of detail, but she did not half hear him, for something very unusual was the matter with Ranna. She was pale and *silent!* Although doomed never to hear a sound, a deaf-mute child makes a great deal of noise unconsciously. After being away from her mother for any time, Ranna always returned to her in a state of excitement, and, in her struggle to impart everything she had seen, kept up a chatter-chatter, with a vigorous gesticulating of hands and arms until she was satisfied that she had told her whole story. But to-day she did nothing. She drooped her head on her mother's breast and was silent. Debby could not rouse her. Shirley came in presently and tried every trick his imagination could contrive to attract his little sister's notice, but Ranna only looked at him with dull, passionless eyes.

Then her father came, and he and Shirley tried what they could do together, while Debby set the table and got supper ready. Shirley, sure that he had thought of the right thing at

last, ran across the road and returned with one of the new little puppies from Captain Bix's. But Ranna would not even look at it, and Shirley carried it back, discouraged.

"If she won't look at a lovely, darlin' new *pup*, father, she won't look at nothin'!" Shirley said, when they had eaten supper and his father was trying to make Ranna notice the big clock which usually pleased her so much.

But it was all useless. The little one was put to bed more quietly than ever before. Debby stood at the foot of the crib and made the signs of the Lord's prayer, after her usual custom. Ranna knew them all; she and her mother often made them together, looking up at the stars. Debby thought the child would understand their significance by and by, when she was old enough to be taught how to read, and she wanted Ranna to remember that they had always said the prayer together. But no answering, repeating sign came from Ranna to-night.

So Debby went with Shirley to see him to bed, and he, after the manner of children, was unusually talkative because of the awful stillness.

"Jus' wait till mornin', mother," he said. "Then *I* 'll make Ranny all right again! I

guess, if I go down to Cap'm Pepper's an' get ole Zanzibar, *he* can make her laugh! She can't help it, if she sees him lick my face upside down. An' I'll stick some splendid shavins — she likes shavin'-curls awfully — on Zanzibar's ears an' his tail. O mother, only wait till Ranny sees him wag his tail with a long shavin' tied to the end of it! Hi-ya! Don't you wish it was mornin'?" So Shirley rattled on, and it was a comfort to hear him. Debby came out of the room looking brighter, got her work-basket, and sat down at the sitting-room table to darn her husband's socks. She could get her hand down into the foot of one and, pulling the top over her arm, stretch it to the tip of her elbow. Elisha made her try it, while he assured her that Ranna would be "all right to-morrow."

But she was not so, by any means. She was quite passive, scarcely tasted her breakfast, and afterwards, while her father worked at the vines before going to his shop, instead of handing up to him the tacks and little bits of leather, — an occupation she generally delighted in, — she sat on the doorstep with her doll, content to do nothing. She waved a feeble good-by when her father and Shirley started off to the shop, which was a quarter of a mile

away, down in the heart of the village. Shirley was going after Zanzibar and the shavings.

But she allowed Captain Pepper to come in without caring even to look at him. She had one pretty sign always ready for him: she would pull at the ropes of an imaginary boat, intimating that she wanted to go sailing with him. He looked for it, but she shook her head now. The captain had come to explain the singular use made of her little dress, sat down on the step, and took Ranna on his knee while he was talking.

"Don't mention the dress, Uncle Zenas!" Debby said. "You ought to have torn it up without stopping to think twice. I 'm so glad the little fellow is n't more hurt!"

"Oh, it 's nothing to fuss over," said the captain. "The pork is curing him as fast as natur wants it to, an' I reckon his walk into the shark 'll save him from walking into his grave!"

After a little more conversation, the captain went away, and Debby went to the wood-shed, back of the barn, to sort over some berries which she was going to do up for winter use.

Ranna might have "come round all right," as her father had said she would, if Mrs. Tuckit had not unluckily hit upon Caleb Bix and Crissy Jones as her messengers to take home

the little dress which she had washed and ironed for Captain Pepper.

Caleb and Crissy were a strong team and an unruly one when they got together. Caleb's father was too well off; that was the main trouble with him. He was the owner of the largest cranberry bog in the county, and allowed Caleb to "carry too much sail," people said. In the cranberry season the boy made trouble among the pickers, "bossing and spying." And the sin of laziness was planted well and grew like a weed.

"If ye want to carry much property that 's valuable," Captain Pepper said, "you must be mighty careful to choose a good vessel. It takes plenty o' ballust an' sound riggin', an' everybody has n't got the hulk for it. I reckon it 's the savin' of most of us that we have to work for a livin'." And of Crissy Jones he said: "Natur gave him a weak bowsprit at the start, and his Aunt S'fia don't steer him straight. She is n't much of a hand at managin', anyhow, an' when it comes to a craft like Criss, she 's all at sea about it. If she 'd coax him along at the tiller, instead of haulin' an' naggin' at the sails, he 'd do well enough."

When the boys reached Elisha Barnes's cottage, Ranna was still sitting on the step,

leaning her head against the side of the doorway. They were going fishing and had their poles over their shoulders.

Crissy knocked at both the front and kitchen doors, but the wind blew and made such a noise in the trees behind the barn where Debby was busy that she did not hear them. Caleb amused himself by poking his pole at Ranna. She usually greeted visitors with a volley of chatter and excited gesture, but now she only put Caleb's pole away from her gently, again and again.

"I say, here 's some fun, Criss!" called Caleb.

Crissy flung the bundle on the grass and also began to poke at Ranna. The dead silence out of which Ranna looked gave to her face when it was in repose an expression which appealed to every one who noticed her. It was intensified now. But Caleb and Crissy were too thoughtless to see it.

"Why don't she gobble?" said Caleb.

"Ye 'd orter heerd her yeste'dy, though!" said Criss.

"Let 's fish for her doll!" said Caleb, unwinding his line for the purpose.

Ranna began to make little moans as she pushed the lines away from her eyes.

The boys had no idea that she was ill, or they would never have gone on teasing her.

"Ho! here's a haul!" cried Crissy, as his hook caught Ranna's hat and he swung it to and fro.

The child wailed louder and reached her hands for it.

"Gobble! gobble! gobble!" said Caleb, imitating perfectly an angry turkey.

Criss slung the hat until he lodged it up in the big silver poplar tree by the gate. He had to shin up the trunk to get his hook out, but it was worth the trouble. Caleb fixed the doll on his hook and dangled it. Ranna made a feeble effort to recover it, but she was too indifferent to make the sport very exciting for the boys, and they would have left her in a minute or two, if a new idea had not seized Crissy. His success with the hat suggested it.

"Hold on! Never mind her any more, Cale! Let's see if we ken sling the bundle up inter that gable-winder!" He stuck his fish-hook through a bit of the parcel and began trying the experiment. It was very good fun, and they took turns at it. Ranna did not mind that until, while the pole was in Caleb's hands, the insufficient piece of paper which was wrapped around the parcel came off and was

blown away, and the dress, unrolled, was left hanging on the hook. Ranna's eyes lighted upon it, and, like a great wave, the scene at the marsh rushed back upon her. Instantly she was like a wild thing. Springing away from the step, she threw herself on the grass, trembling all over with passion. With a bound she was up again, tearing away, now this way, now that, with the speed of a fawn, flinging herself anywhere away from the touch of the gown. Fright such as she had never known possessed her. The sight of that sickening blood came back upon her; she could see nothing else.

"Drap it! drap it!" cried Crissy, alarmed. But Caleb paid no heed, and, delighted to have made Ranna chatter at last, continued the game, racing about in order to keep her motions within the boundary of the house front.

"Drap it! drap it!" cried Crissy again. "Here comes Shirley Barnes, an' his father 'll give us jassy, I tell ye!"

Ranna was making strange, unearthly sounds, in short, quick gasps, as she rushed everywhere, trying to escape from Caleb, and nobody heard her except poor little Shirley, who was coming down the road with Zanzibar decked out with long shavings streaming and dangling

from ears and tail. But Shirley tore through the gate and flung himself into the midst of the fray, with Zanzibar. There was a fearful moment when Shirley, Crissy, and the dog rolled over together; when Caleb tore the dress off the hook, flung it on the ground, and dragged Crissy away just in time to escape before his old uncle, Captain Laban, came hobbling across the road to see what was the matter, and Debby dropped on her knees before Ranna, who was lying, white as snow, on the bed of trampled pansies.

XIII.

HOW UNREASONABLY SEVERE CHALLEY AND BOB SHOWED THEMSELVES TOWARD THE WHOLE BRITISH NATION; AND HOW SHIRLEY BARNES CONVINCED CHALLEY THAT HE KNEW BETTER THAN ANYBODY WHAT WAS THE MATTER WITH RANNA.

IT was great fun to have a wounded leg. To have papa to play with, Molly to wait upon him and make him her kind of milk toast, and Captain Pepper out in the shop, making him a pair of crutches, coming in to measure him for them, and all" — "It 's just as good, papa," Bob said, "as if I was a real soldier and had got wounded fighting the British!"

"Only you don't get *me* to be the British, now Bob!" said Challey, who was building a fort with the blocks on the floor of the sitting-room, so that Bob could presently take part in a battle between two armies of tin soldiers.

"Well, I don't see why; I think you 're real mean, if you don't! *I* can't do it, up here on the sofa!"

"You would n't do it, no matter where you were, and you know it, Bob," said Challey. "And you can do the British better on the sofa, because it 'll be a gra-deal harder to fire the cannon from there, and easier for the Americans to beat. Do *you* think it 's fair, papa?" he asked, turning to his father, who was whittling a miniature cannon. "Bob always wants *me* to be the British! He 'll never be the enemy. He 's only been the British twice this summer, and he has n't been the Indians at all! And you can't fight a battle without the British!"

"Of course not," said Mr. Chezzle. "But that is a difficulty easy to settle now, because *I* will be the British."

But this proposition was hailed with scorn and derision. "Ho-o-o-o-oh!" they both cried, groaning down a scale of contemptuous notes, and Bob screamed: "*That* 'd be unfairer than anything! Because, you see, if you 're an army in a battle, you 've got to fight as well as you can, and we have the marbles for cannon-balls, and *you* are the best shot! Don't you see?"

"Yes, I see that," said Mr. Chezzle, smiling;

"but why can't we fight the battle of Long Island, where the British beat by a" —

"No! no! no!" both boys screamed at once.

"Not quite so loud!" said Mr. Chezzle. "I don't believe both armies, put together, made such a noise about it. Wait: the British certainly *did* beat at the battle of Long Island, and afterwards, as you have learned in your history, Chal" —

"No, *sir!* That 's just what I *did n't* learn, papa!" said Challey, getting up on his feet to give his father the facts better. "The battle of Long Island!" he cried, defiantly. "And the defeat of the Americans for ever so long afterwards! and the British gaining victories and advantages every minute, and nothing but disasters an' disasters to Our army! There are two whole chapters all about that and nothing else, and our history class just would n't *stand* it, and we went to Mr. Gray at recess, and we told him we did n't *want* to learn those chapters, and he said we might skip 'em! Hm! Do you think a man 'd have any *right* to make a boy learn such chapters as those? Anyhow, Mr. Gray did n't! He was on our side right off, and said we might skip *every word!*"

"Yes!" cried Bob, wagging his head with Challey's; "and we 're going to skip the disaster part in our history too, in *my* class; but we 've got seven chapters before we get to it."

"Don't you think Mr. Gray is the best teacher in the whole world, papa?" asked Challey, settling down again on the floor.

"Certainly, I do," said his father. "But I don't see exactly how you manage, if you follow history. And especially, if you do your best and Challey shoots for the British. He must be a better shot than you, Bob; don't you let them beat, un" —

"NO! The British never beat!" they both roared at once. Then Challey explained: "You see, here 's the fort, and the Americans have got possession of it, and the best marbles and soldiers are inside. Bob manages that. Then, across six squares of the carpet, here is the enemy, and they have n't so many marbles, and their soldiers are the most damaged and can't stand up so well. I manage that. Then it 's night, and the British are asleep when the Americans begin. Bob is n't so good a shot, but the British don't wake up till he 's had one good hit. By agreeing to that, we manage pretty well. I know," said Challey, earnestly, "it 's giving the Americans

the advantage every time, and it 's meaner to take the enemy by surprise! It 's lots more fun when Bob *will* take their side, because I can give him the advantage and beat him, too. But then, this way is better than letting the British beat."

"Yes!" said Bob, dolefully; "it 's better than *that!* But I ain't the feller to turn against my country, Challey; so you just need n't expect it! Jim Holburn was British once, and that was fun; but he won't be it any more; none o' the boys will. How would you manage, papa?"

But the question was a puzzle even to papa.

"We tried having a girl once — Elva Tuck- it did it," said Challey; "and that was sort o' good, 'cause girls are n't any kind o' shots, you know, and it was awfully easy to beat her. But she wanted to have hospitals and take care of the wounded and everything, and boys don't care for that. If a soldier's leg is shot off, why it 's off, you know, an' we like to play that he don't mind it, but just fires once more and kills a British officer, and then he dies."

"Yes," Bob struck in, — it was a very exciting play, — "girls are n't worth anything to play battle with! Besides the wounded, Elva wanted a Daughter of the Regiment! What

do men want of Daughters of the Regiment going round? We let her have one in the enemy's army; they 're good enough for the British!"

So the boys rattled on about their plays, and Mr. Chezzle patched up the American army, making more chips than had ever been seen before on the sitting-room carpet.

"But I 've been obsarvin' Captain Pepper-sir, most par-tickler," said Molly, as she brushed up the litter; "an' it was plazin' to his faylins, sir, that yez decloined makin' yersilf comfort-ubble in the porler. An' I told him, says I to him, Captain Pepper-sir, says I, 'it 's Mr. Chizzle has the dilicate comprehinsion of a lone widdywer, wid Mrs. Chizzle acrost the dape ocean. An' it 's Molly Dolan-sir, says I-sir, that 'll respict the sperrit-faylins of Mrs. Pepper that was, an' not be doin' annything out o' place that wuddent be in accardence wid her own ways.'"

Molly suffered unnecessary anxiety on this score, for the relief which it was to Captain Pepper to have Mr. Chezzle and herself responsible for Bob's welfare, crowded out of his mind his usual worries concerning the house affairs. Nevertheless, Molly trod on tiptoe over the sacred mats which Luella had braided, was

half inclined to apologize to the feather-beds for shaking them, spread the sheets and blankets with gentle strokes and tuckings, and patted the pillows soothingly. She also gratified the captain by admiring the ease and skill which he displayed in the kitchen.

He had n't "cooked aboard ship, an' been captain an' mate an' doctor an' highcockolorum all his life without learning a few things!" he told her, while showing her how to make chowder.

"So ye need n't worrit, Mr. Chizzle-sir, but I 'll git along all right," said Molly.

"Indeed, I don't worry a bit about you, Molly," said Mr. Chezzle; "you would get along anywhere."

"An' aisy it is, sir," said Molly; "an' I 'll give ye a resate for the same. Take plinty of instroocktion — that 's wan thing. Ye must make yersilf willin' to be taght what ye know oll about, in the first place; and, afther that, obtain fargiveness. Nivver moind what it 's *far*, Mr. Chizzle-sir; don't be thriflin' wid findin' out, but take it *oll*. It 's a foine accomplishment to know how to take thim two things, an' it 's mesilf that 's taken more o' both, in me toime, than ye 'll find in a thrugshtore!"

Molly sat down by Bob's sofa to mend up his and Challey's clothes, which, she said, looked "as if the fishes had been takin' a chaw at thim, toimes whin dillicate refrashment like byes' legs was denied thim!"

In a little while came Shirley Barnes with the sad news that Ranna was very dangerously ill, and petitioning for Challey to come. Shirley was sure that *he* could help Ranna.

"It 's 'cause she 's scared; she got scared when Bob got bit, an' she 's scared so it makes her mos' die!" sobbed Shirley. "An' I ran to get Challey, 'cause Ranny— she — she loves him barrels-full. Alex an' Jim said Challey made her quiet when she was rarin' at the mash."

"O come! come, papa!" cried Challey, pulling his father along. "I *do* know what to do. Ranna *will* be quiet for me, 'cause you know Bob an' I saved her from the Indians when she was lost; an' when I put my hand softly over her mouth an' shake my head, it makes her as still as anything!" Challey was hurrying his father and Captain Pepper down the road while he was talking. "And, papa," he said, squeezing his father's hand, "you notice Ranna and tell me if *you* know what makes me feel like taking care of her, and sorry for her even when she 's happy."

When they reached the house, Mr. Chezzle and Captain Pepper went in softly, leaving the two boys outside to wait for them.

It seemed as if they were gone a long time. Two yellow-birds in the silver poplar tree were teaching their young ones to fly and making a great to-do. Looking up at them, Challey saw Ranna's old, battered straw hat. He climbed up for it and was very tender of it. Ranna's moans came through the windows, and, although they knew she could not hear, the children talked in whispers. Shirley crept into the house and stayed awhile, trying to persuade somebody that Challey could help Ranna, if he could only be allowed to try. He came out again, however, and said: "No, Challey, they won't let anybody but papa upstairs! They say Ranny don't know anybody now, an' she 's rarin' wuss than ever! *I* know wot ails her, but they won't listen to me 'cause I 'm only a little boy!" Challey put his arm over Shirley's neck and said: "Come, let 's tell Molly all about it, Shirley; *she* 'll listen, I know."

So Shirley told Molly his whole story at last, saying, at the end: "I *know* it 's all Cale Bix an' Crissy Jones that *scared her mos' to death!* That 's wot 's the matter, Molly; an' — wo-won't *you* go tell the people? Cale an' Crissy

has gone off to Bedford on Cap'm Jones's schooner; but *they* would n't tell the truth, if they was here! An' it *is* the truth; an' I 'm go-goin' to f-f-f-fight both o' them boys, I am!!"

But Molly was a great comfort to Shirley and sent him home brighter for her promise to tell Mr. Chezzle and Captain Pepper his story, at least.

Bob declared it was all nonsense. "*I* 'm the fellow that got bit," he said, "and if *I* ain't scared, I don't see why anybody else is!"

Mr. Chezzle and Captain Pepper came in, and to them Molly repeated Shirley's story. The captain was inclined to treat it as child's talk and of no consequence, but Mr. Chezzle listened to it more seriously.

"Where is Challey?" he asked. "Every one seems to agree that he quieted the poor little girl when others failed; let us find what he has to say. Where is Challey, Bob?"

Bob pointed to the soles of Challey's shoes sticking out from under the big leaf of a table.

"You might as well come out, Challey; everybody knows you 're there," said Bob.

Challey's face worked painfully as he crawled out.

"Come here, Challey-boy," said his father,

gently, and lifting him upon his knee. "Tell papa what it is, dear boy."

Challey buried his face against his father's bosom and broke down, sobbing.

"It 's all Ranna," he said, brokenly. "She 's so little, papa! An' she don't know even so much as Zanzibar, but she wants to, an' she looks, an' looks, an' looks at me just as if she believed *I* knew everything! And I feel as if she 'd die if I did n't find out *now* what frightens her! Maybe I could! *Maybe* I could!"

"An' so you shall — you shall, me darlint!" said Molly, interrupting and putting away her work. "It 's the Lord that 's maybe given it to the chilt to know, Mr. Chizzle-sir, an' it 's His wark denyin' spache to the pore little lone thing yander; an' it 's not for me nor anny one to be sayin' that it 's not the sowl o' Saint Michael himsilf that 's spakin' troo the moind of Challey this blessèd minute of toime! It 's Bob does n't nade me the whilst I take a smahl run an' make Mrs. Barnes an offer of me sarvices for a shart time annyhow!" So saying, Molly hurried away, and Challey, much relieved, set to work to repair the ruins of the broken forts.

The next morning Mr. Chezzle returned to Boston. But Captain Pepper begged Molly to

remain for a week or so, and he was particularly glad to have her consent because her visit to the little Ranna had proved of great service to Debby. So she stayed; and every day, after devoting the morning to Bob and giving such assistance in the house affairs as the captain would allow, she went to take the mother's place beside Ranna for a few hours. What a comfort it was to Debby to see Molly's fresh, bright face in the doorway, only Debby herself and Elisha knew.

XIV.

HOW CHALLEY SAVED RANNA'S LIFE WHEN NOBODY ELSE COULD.

BOB was disappointed. His leg got well so fast that he did not have half the fun he had expected out of the crutches. And, worse still, Captain Pepper took them away from him just when he wanted them the most, which made Bob call him an "Injungiver!" He called the captain that dreadful name at night, in the dark, after Challey and he were in bed, when the captain had gone to smoke his pipe on the front porch. And he said he wished Molly had not moved over to Shirley's house, so that "*she* could put him to bed, 'stead of Cap'm Pepper!"

"That is n't fair, Bob," said Challey. "Cap'm Pepper only took your crutches away

because you were learning to go down-stairs backwards and climb over the fence with them. And he said he reckoned he took 'em just in time to save your life."

"I don't care!" said Bob. "He would n't let me even bring 'em to bed; and he *is* a Injungiver!"

"Well," said Challey, "you know you could n't help rolling over onto 'em and waking yourself up, Bob. And when you wake up, all the rest of us have got to wake up too!"

"Well, I guess *you* 'd wake somebody up if *you* dreamt you got lost and a buffalo's horns" — Bob's voice was wailing off into a cry, he was so sorry for himself.

"Anyhow, Bob," said Challey, "the buffalo is n't here now. *Do* be still. You know, at any rate, that your leg has been well for ever so long, and you have n't needed the crutches since" —

"Yes I have too!" cried Bob. "Molly said when she was here that of course my leg was stiffer in the mornings. But it gets better by the time breakfast 's atten. It 'll be worse, though, to-morrow; you see if it is n't! Just wait till Cap'm Pepper sees me try to walk without crutches! He 'll feel sorry enough *then!*"

"Well, you won't get 'em back, I don't believe, anyhow," said Challey; "and you ought n't to call him 'Injungiver' because you know you 're only mad and you *really* love him."

"No I don't; I hate him!" said Bob. "He 's as bad as the British! Everybody is as bad as the British when they don't do anything I want 'em to. And when I 'm mad, I *don't* love people — I hate 'em!"

"Cap'm Pepper read out of the Bible that you must n't stay angry after the sun went down; and he said we 'd feel bad if we went to sleep hating anybody," said Challey.

"*I* won't!" said Bob. "I just as lief go to sleep hating 'em as to stay awake hating 'em; and I don't believe that, anyhow. *I* think it 's a lot wickeder to hate while you 're awake, 'cause you know what you 're about then, and if you go to sleep doing it you *have* to stop. You can't hate folks while you 're snoring, can you? So there!"

"Well anyhow, you 'd better say, 'Forgive us,' over again," said Challey, who felt virtuous in contrast with Bob's state of mind.

"I won't!" said Bob. "I don't want the Father in Heaven to forgive me to-night. I 'm not going to ask him to do it till to-morrow, and maybe not till the day after."

Challey gave up trying any further to impress Christian feelings upon his brother, and that unrepentant little sinner, since the truth must be told, went to sleep entirely satisfied with his own perversity. When morning came, however, his ill-feelings had vanished, and he went to breakfast "piggy-back" on the captain's shoulders, entirely forgetting that he had intended to decline the invitation and to limp down-stairs by himself in the most painful manner possible.

The captain trotted with him around the breakfast table, out, through the kitchen, into the garden, — Challey holding on to the tail of his pea-jacket, — around the house, and back again into the sitting-room, where he stopped in front of the high clock. "Holloa! Is it mine?" asked Bob, taking a letter from the clock-face.

"It 's for both, I reckon, as it has n't got either of your given names on it. Let Challey open it, as he is the biggest," the captain said.

Challey recognized his cousin Maria's irregular handwriting. "Mess-mess-i-eurs," he read. "*That* is n't in our names. But it 's our letter, because 'Chezzle' comes after it. I don't see why she calls us 'Mess-i-ers.'"

"Perhaps it 's the French for 'messmates,'" said Bob, and they agreed at once that it was.

It was a good deal of trouble to read one of Maria's letters, because of the French phrases and terminations. Letters are not always sources of unmitigated pleasure to boys, especially when they have to be answered.

"Our cousin Maria 'd be a lot nicer if she was our language," Bob said.

"Yes," said Challey, "French is worse than Mr. Steeples when he comes to our house to dinner;" and he further explained to Captain Pepper, "Mr. Steeples knows everything, and he teaches it to people at the table."

"There!" said the captain, thinking it was as well not to discuss Mr. Steeples. "Here are the spuds," setting a dish of baked potatoes on the table. "Come, eat your breakfast, an' then run along to Miss Leigh with your letter."

The boys always carried Maria's letters to Miss Leigh, the school-teacher, to get them translated, or interpreted. But they had planned to dig clams this morning, and Challey said: "It 'll be a dreadful waste of low tide to go!

"I wish Maria 'd send her letters in the noon mail-bag, or else — there!" he suddenly

broke out, intensely bored, and flinging himself upon his seat at the table. "I just *hate* French letters! And I don't care a snap about the French country, either!"

"Belay your feelins for a spell," said Captain Pepper. "I 've got a notion — only a *notion*, mind, that you 'll have a better opinion of the French nation and maybe of the language into the bargain, *after* you read that letter."

"Why? why?" asked both boys, for there was a twinkle in the captain's eye, and he looked as if he knew something very pleasant.

"Never you mind *why*," he said; "but I don't often get a notion into the sou'sou'west corner of my intellect unless it means something."

It certainly did this time. Half an hour afterwards, the boys were sitting on the captain's fence, with Alex and Clifford Tuckit, Jim Holburn, and Shirley Barnes, all huddled in a compact row, Challey and Bob in the middle. The captain's prediction proved correct. The feelings of the two boys toward the French had altered. Not only that, they meant everybody to know it.

"*I* think French is the best language in the whole world; don't you, Challey?" said Bob.

"Yes sir-ee, of course I do," said Challey.

"And when it 's mixed up with English it 's just splendid!"

"Ken you speak it?" asked Clifford.

"Ye-e-es!" said Bob. "Of course! Dunny-moy de burr — that 's French. And I think France is the best country, too, except America."

"So do I!" cried Challey. "If there 's ever a war between France and any other country, *I* 'm going to stand up for France!"

"So am I!" said Bob. "And *won't* I give it to — to the French's enemy!" Bob doubled up his fists and glared at Shirley, who wagged his head and said 'he guessed he 'd join the French too.'

"Well!" said Bob, swelling up so much with importance that he was obliged to get down from the fence to imitate Captain Pepper by giving his small breeches a hitch. "I guess any fellow that wants to sail *my* French boat 'll have to go in for Maria an' Uncle Tom, *any*how!"

"Who 's M'riar?" asked Clifford.

Bob did not stop to take breath. "She 's our French cousin over in Europe and her father 's our Uncle Tom and she 's the best and nicest cousin in the whole world and so 's Uncle Tom the best uncle any boy ever had!"

he screamed, louder and louder, while Challey was saying in a steady undertone: "She 's Maria Annty-net Penroy and her father 's my mother's big brother and they live in France where they make the best ships and, if you want me to, I 'll read her letter about the boats out loud."

As Bob talked the fastest, he got through first, and the last clause of Challey's speech was understood and met with approval. So he pulled the letter, much crumpled already, out of his pocket and read as follows, interpreting as he went along: —

"'MAY SHARE KOOZANGS.' That 's the French for 'my dear cousins.' You will get two boats. It is mong papa that send me to the store to buy them. Share Tont' — that means 'dear aunt'; she calls mamma that. 'Share Tont is much a-tonny they are so big but my papa think them tooty fay bong.' 'A-tonny' means astonished, and 'tooty fay bong' means 'entirely good.' 'I tell share Tont that I love may koozangs tray large boats full with many sails. Ad-jew, voter koozeen,

MARIA ANNTY-NET PENROY.'"

Challey felt very scholarly to be able to interpret so much French, and the boys admired

him greatly. They all went in a body to consult Captain Pepper about the time when the boats might arrive. As Mrs. Chezzle had written to him not to look for them until near Challey's birthday, and as that was not to be until August 16th, nearly a fortnight, the captain decided to interest them during the interval in the building of a miniature wharf on his little strip of beach; a decision which was a stroke of genius on his part, as, without it, the impatience of the boys would have been hard to bear.

The hope that Ranna would be well by the birthday helped also to make the children more patient. The poor little mute continued very ill, however, and was either in a stupor or delirious most of the time. Molly, after Bob ceased to need her, had taken up her abode at the Barnes's cottage, and, with her natural love for children, and her interest in Ranna much increased by Challey and Shirley, she was a most skilful nurse.

One day a slight incident gave her a new clue to the situation. She was arranging things more tidily in a closet and happened to hang on a peg at the foot of the child's bed the little dress which had been wrapped around Bob's leg when the fish had bitten him. Ranna,

coming out of a stupor, caught sight of it and instantly became violently excited. It did not take Molly long to discover that the sight of the dress was enough to fill the child with fear which was painful to witness. She put it away, after satisfying herself of the fact, and set to work to think, while she sewed with great energy. By and by, when Debby came in, Molly, with a new idea in her mind, put on her bonnet and went in search of Challey. She found him at work upon the wharf, and taking him to a point at a little distance from which a window in the Barnes cottage was visible, told him to look at it often, and if he saw a towel fastened to the shutter to go to her at once. Two days afterwards Challey perceived the signal, and in a few minutes was clattering up the stairs leading to Ranna's room. Molly hurried to meet him in the entry.

"Whisht! she 's slaping," she said.

"But she could n't hear me, Molly," said Challey, out of breath with running, "if I made the loudest noise I can."

"I know, I know, darlint," said Molly; "but it 's not aisy to remimber that same. Nivver moind it — only mark what I 'll be sayin'. Rannan slapes heavy — the same as she 's slapin' this minute, ontil her breath grows that

hard she 's not able to draw it longer an' thin she wakes up suddent. I 've been watchin', an' I 've larned wan thing: she 's in a fright manny an' manny a toime; but — ye moind now what yersilf an' Shulley told me whin I axed yez all about it — the dress she had on that day, an' thim oogly byes had it shakin' at her the day she tuk sick — do ye moind, Challey?"

Challey, with his glorious eyes fixed upon Molly's face, minded every syllable. "Go on; don't stop, Molly," was all he said.

"Well, darlint," continued Molly, "the fright takes her, whin she sets eyes on that dress, in a way that 's ahful to say; an' I 've made up me moind that she thinks, whin she 's lookin' at it, that she 's there at the same spot agin where yez played wid the whale. Whisht now! an' don't spake, for she 'll be wakin' shartly. Ye moind how she went mad wid the sight o' blood that day? Maybe she 's thinkin' it oll over, an' Shulley says the dress was covered wid it. Now it was yous, Challey, that got her quiet *thin;* I want yez to do the same now. Come in the room quiet, me love, an' stan' where her eyes 'll light on ye. I want Rannan to see Challey Chizzle instid o' the ahful thing in her moind! An' I 've talked it over wid her

mother that 's in there too, to see what the chilt 'll do whin she sees him ! "

Molly led Challey into the room. His face worked, and he could not help crying at first, Ranna looked so unnatural and wasted. Debby drew him close to her, and stood with him at the foot of the little bed. How heavy Ranna's breathing was ! He thought it must hurt to breathe like that. And she waited so long between ! He counted six of his own breaths in the intervals. He was counting again, when Molly said :

" Whisht ! she 's wakin' ; closer, Challey — there ! " The two women stood aside and waited, motionless.

One mighty breath, a start, and Ranna's eyes opened wide. Challey was bending over her ; she looked right into his face. He smiled touchingly at her and laid his hands upon hers. Look ! Was that the beginning of a smile upon her lips ? It passed too quickly to tell. With a violent start, she threw both arms around Challey and clung to him an instant. Then she let go with one hand to point to something at the foot of the bed, hid her face against him, and trembled all over. Again and again she did the same thing, let go, clung to him, and made desperate mute

appeals to him. Challey tried his innocent wiles to quiet her, but in vain; she only repeated her frantic gestures.

Challey looked imploringly at Molly. "Yes, darlint, I think I know!" said Molly, her face white as snow, and her eyes intensely eager. "Kape yer place beside her till I tell yez to do somethin'; an' will ye *do* it Challey bye? Will ye *do* it?"

"Yes, Molly; yes I will, if she 'll let me," sobbed Challey.

"Go thin, whin I say the wurrid," said Molly; "go thin, swateheart, an' take Rannan's dress from where it 's hangin' there. Bring it to her, so she 'll see it plain as the day" —

"Oh Molly!" moaned Challey, beseeching.

"Do it jest as I tell yez, me love!" said Molly, steadily. "Show it to her *plain*, an' thin take it slow — slow, to let her watch yez — take it to the fire on the hearth, and let her see yez put it right onto the coals — an' the whilst ye do that, I 'll make her look at it burnin'. Now, me love — *now!*" — Molly unclasped Ranna's arms from Challey's neck, lifted her, although she struggled violently, and held her firmly in her strong arms while the boy did as she had told him. Ranna watched his every motion. Her face was drawn with

terror and pitiful to behold as he showed her the dress, but, as he walked with it to the fireplace and set it ablaze; as she saw it burn, — Molly carried her close to the fire, — as the little gown lost all shape in the flames and burned to ashes, a change came over Ranna. The muscles of her face relaxed, her eyes lost their wildness, she turned to Challey with one long look of love, — love and unbounded gratitude, — and at last! at last! her own rare, wonderful smile broke all over her face.

"Nearer, Challey, nearer, dear boy; she wants you!" whispered Debby, hoarsely, kneeling with clasped hands, and never taking her eyes from Ranna. Challey drew close just in time to let the little head fall upon his neck and feel one caress from the child's hands before they fell, sliding, powerless, from his shoulders.

"That 's *all* right now! All right *now!*" said Molly's cheery voice. "Don't cry no more, Challey love, but go send the doctor to us an' tell him the wark 'll be hopefuller now!" Challey ran like the wind.

Late that night, when the captain went upstairs and looked in at the children, Bob was fast asleep, but Challey was sitting bolt-upright in bed.

"H'lo, messmate! what the matter?" asked the captain, sitting down on the edge of his cot.

"I can't sleep," said Challey, tears rolling down his cheeks. "I keep feeling Ranna's head right here," touching his neck, "and I can see her face the way it was — and then," sobs came so that it was hard to get the words out, — "the way it was, all dreadful, and then — then — the way the angels look!"

"But *she* is n't an angel yet, boy! No!" said the captain, cheerfully; "an' she won't be for a long spell. She 's ridin' on a quiet sea now, my boy, full sail, with a fair wind, an' she 'll git into port mighty soon, with all her colors flyin' at her topmast! Think o' *that*, Challey!"

"I know it," said Challey, with a little, happy laugh, and wiping his eyes with his nightgown sleeve. "I — I ain't cryin', Cap'm Pepper! it 's water that comes into — into my eyes! I 'm so glad she 's goin' to get well that — I 'm laughing, I am — I can't help it!" he added, with a sob. "But I want to know something. Do you think" — Challey's eyes were so big and earnest now — "do you think *God* understands Ranna?"

"Why yes, of course I do," said the cap-

tain. "Everybody understands what they make themselves, Challey, of course! And she is n't any more of a puzzle to the Lord than — than the little boat you made yesterday is to you! Now go to sleep, sonny, an' ye 'll see things clear as sunshine in the morning."

"Yes, I will," said Challey, nestling down contentedly under the bedclothes. "Ranna 's all right, if He understands. I 'm glad He does, but I wish He did n't have to keep it a secret!"

XV.

THE LAUNCHING OF THE "MARIA PEPPER" AND THE "THOMAS ANTOINETTE."

CHALLEY'S birthday came at last, and the boxes containing the famous boats were out in Captain Pepper's wood-house. And he was not the man to keep boys waiting — not he! Instead of trotting around the garden, with Bob on his back and Challey following behind, to take their morning "shake-up" before breakfast, the captain made a bee-line for the wood-house, and the boys had a good chance to examine the big cases, with Charles T. P. Chezzle on one, and Robert H. Chezzle on the other, printed in rousing big letters, and plenty of daubs and labels on both.

It did not take long to eat breakfast that morning; there was no dawdling. And after that was over, the only thing they had to do was to run across the road to get the Tuckit

family and send little Cliff to tell Jim Holburn and just a few of the other boys. Cliff's legs were sturdy, though, if they were little, and it was astonishing how quickly he collected a crowd. There were "ohs!" in every key that was ever invented, at sight of the boxes, but when the ends were unscrewed and the ships were slid out on runners, as if they were being launched, the rafters rang with shouts.

There had never been an excitement of the kind in Nipsit, and the boy populace were delighted. For the Chezzle boys were neither exclusive nor selfish, and this meant fun for everybody. The captain selected certain boys to help Challey and Bob carry the boats down to the shore, and they were joined by every child who caught sight or sound of what was going on.

Then the little ships were launched from the new wharf, amid the waving of all the flags which Uncle Tom had sent with them. They sailed beautifully, and in the course of fifteen minutes there were more little bare legs paddling over the shoals than it was easy to count, and enough to furnish a meal for a whole school of young sharks! A fine morning the children had of it, for the sun was warm and the tide low enough to admit of plenty of wad-

ing. Dinner was looked upon as a frightful bore. Challey and Bob were followed back to the wood-house by a retinue of boys, for they had grown very popular indeed.

But every one had gone when Elva Tuckit, who had been down on the shore with the baby in her arms, spied little Jim Holburn running by the garden fence, wiping his eyes with his shirt-sleeve.

"What 's the matter, Jim?" said Elva, heading him off gently. Elva was very good to Jim. In fact, she was good to children generally, helped many an one out of a scrape, and had eyes that were quick to discover the chance to do them a good turn. Elva was freckled and ungainly, her nose was larger than she wished it was, and her feet clumsier, but there was grace and beauty in her soul.

She hoisted the baby deftly upon her left arm and had a hand to lay upon Jim's shoulder. Jim smothered a sob with a tremendous sniff.

"Here!" said Elva, confidentially; "come into the barn-yard — nobody 'll see us behind the hen-coop." She led him by the hand and said again: "What 's the matter, Jim? Were the boys ugly to ye?"

"No," said Jim, mournfully; "I l-l-loike 'em dreadful much, but" —

"But what, Jim?" asked Elva, sitting the baby on the hen-coop while she righted Jim's hair and put his cap on straight. "Ye need n't mind tellin' *me*, ye know; did ye get hurt?"

"No!" said Jim, looking up to her with a tinge of scorn. "As ef I 'd croy 'cause I 'd got hurt! I hain't croyin' neow, an' I hain't agoin' to, nuther." Elva said, "Of course not!" and Jim went on: "But them boats, Elvy! Don't *yew* wish you hed a cousin Mriar an' uncle Tom? But don't tell I croyed — will ye?"

"No indeed," said Elva, feeling a pang for poor little Jim. "Ye did n't cry enough to tell about, Jim. But ye 'll get a sight o' fun out o' them boats — see if ye don't. Chal an' Bobby are real friendly boys, Jim, an' they 'll let you be captain sometimes — I 'll ask 'em to, myself."

"Will ye?" said Jim. "Then they 'll do it, I should n't wonder, tomorrer mornin'! G'bye!"

Jim ran home while Elva lifted up the baby again and thought to herself that it *would* be nice if Jim had an uncle Tom, or a cousin, or something!

A drizzling rain the next day prevented the boys from sailing their boats again, but it gave a fine opportunity for writing letters of thanks

to their uncle and cousin. They were very economical of time spent in this way, and agreed to divide the expression of their gratitude between Uncle Tom and Maria; Challey to write to the former, and Bob to the latter.

Challey wrote: —

"DEAR UNCLE TOM, I thank you very moch for my boat. We sailed them yestidy and all the boys go in for the french and we luffed the sales and highsted the colors and played on the sholes bearlegd. Thair is a fog and I tell You if they is a war with france Bob and I are going to fite for You and Cousin maria and so are all the boys in Nipsit and captin Pepper. I love You and maria and mamma big war vessles full wen is mamma coming home.

CHARLES TEMPLETON PENROY CHEZZLE.

"ps captain Pepper took Bob's krutches away 'cause he said Bob wood keel over his topmast into gulloaryhallyluyer he slid down the bannisters lots."

Bob wrote: —

"DER CUZZEN MERIRE a french cuzzen is the best thing to have i think you and unkle tom ar furs clas and mi bote is furs claser challys bote is named merire Pepper and mine is the tomas antynet. ROBERT HUNTINGDON CHEZZLE

the end."

XVI.

HOW MUCH FASTER MR. PENROY GOT WELL THAN THE DOCTORS EXPECTED HIM TO.

From Mrs. Chezzle's Journal.

JULY 30. On the morning when M. Duvergne called on me, I went to Tom's room later than usual.

"Ah, another one!" exclaimed Tom, as soon as he looked at me.

"Another what?" I asked.

"She asks 'Another what?'" he said; "and she knows it is in her pocket!" I could not imagine what he meant, but he went on with his nonsense. "It is of no use, Mrs. Chezzle, for you to conceal a fact so palpable and innocent. I have learned that nothing is so becoming to you as a casual mention of your Chezzle or the Middies! I have frequently brought them into our conversation for the

express purpose of putting a little more tone into your countenance and adding a certain poise to your figure which it requires to make it entirely satisfactory!"

He went on teasing me pleasantly in that fashion for awhile, and then asked: "Well, if you have n't any letters, what has happened? What, or who has given you that agreeable expression?"

I answered, quietly: "M. Duvergne."

"*What?*" roared Tom. He was honestly surprised that time.

"I have had an hour's talk with M. Duvergne this morning; he called to see me," I said.

"Good King George of Oxford!" exclaimed Tom under his breath; and after a moment of silence he asked: "What on earth did Dombey and Son want of you?"

"He does not want anything whatever of me," I said; "he wants to see you. But the doctors have reported you to him as being too ill to see any one excepting your physicians and attendants. He has been terribly distressed, Tom, to hear of your sufferings and reduced condition, and when I told him that I did not share the discouraging views of the doctors, he seemed so glad that it was delightful to see him. He

said it was of no use for him to ask the doctors' permission to see you, or to send you any more messages by them, and he had therefore called upon me. He said, if it troubled you, he would postpone all conversation upon business matters until you were better, that all he desired was to see you and to restore, if possible, your confidence in his friendship and its sincerity." Tom's attention was riveted upon every word I had to say about my conversation with the lawyer.

"Go on, my child!" he said, once. "Do not omit anything which it is possible for you to recall of that conversation. You are letting daylight into my recollection of several shadowy circumstances and setting me to guessing riddles — proceed!"

So I told him everything except about my little outburst concerning his will, and ended by asking him to let me write to M. Duvergne and appoint a time for him to call. He was silent for some minutes, and then said, taking my work away and keeping one of my hands: "Why, I will — you need not mention it, my dear, but I will write to Duvergne myself."

He was going to say something more, but evidently changed his mind. He knitted his brows and was very grave for a time, forget-

ting that he was still holding and stroking my hand.

Then he smiled suddenly in a pleasant way and said: "Call Antoine, my dear; I think I will get up."

July 31. Both Messieurs Roubaix and Duvergne appeared this morning and were closeted with Tom for full two hours in his cosy little study. The two doctors also appeared and were again met by Maria with Tom's absurd message that he was "too ill to see them." The child stood on the stairs with her arms stretched across from wall to banisters, looking down upon them.

"How?" said Dr. Frédiqueue, in a tone of surprise, putting a foot on the bottom step. "If he is so ill, mademoiselle, it is necessary that we see him immediately!"

"Non Monsieur!" said Maria. "My papa sees only Dr. Antoine to-day! My aunt is in the parlor and she will explain. Papa says so. Chère Tante!" she called down to me and retreated, as fast as she could go, up-stairs.

Added to my confusion, I felt a little indignation that Tom should leave me to invent an excuse for his absurd message. But the gentlemen, luckily, took up another point of grievance.

"How is this? What does this mean, Madame Shezelle?" asked Dr. Frédiqueue, nervously. "Is M. Pennaroi consulting another physician?"

"Yes, Madame!" interrupted Dr. De la Quille, with austerity — far more agreeable, I assure you, than his usual sweetness. "Is M. Pennaroi committing such a serious impropriety?"

"Oh, not at all! not at all, gentlemen!" I exclaimed. "It is Mademoiselle Maria's pleasantry alone which awards the title of 'Doctor' to Antoine, M. Penroy's attendant."

"Ah!" they both cried at once, much relieved; and they continued in mixed murmurs of: "It is amusing, that!" "Mlle. Maria's pleasantry is charming!" "Absolutely charming!"

But I knew they wanted to shake her. I explained to them simply that my brother was inclined to rest and did not think a professional visit necessary; that was all.

"But I shall invent no more excuses for your ridiculous messages, Mr. Tom!" I said to myself. Moreover, I told him so, late in the afternoon, when Maria came to take me to his study where she expected me to be much surprised to see him sitting up in a big arm-

chair. I could be as surprised as she wished, for Tom looked handsomer than I had ever seen him. In bed he had looked full fifty years old; now he looked his age, forty-three.

Maria provided us with an unexpected entertainment, however, in the shape of a letter which M. Duvergne had written, from her dictation, to the boys. She brought out the fact that she has been making frequent calls upon him in his little office opening on the garden, and I learned that he was the mysterious gentleman I had heard the servants mention with so much awe. But Maria regards him as a most intimate friend, whom she admires immensely because of his respect for her doll, Marguérite Helène Penroy. She was very proud of the length of her letter which M. Duvergne had advised her 'to show to her aunt who might wish to send some message to her little boys.'

August 1. Oh, Jack! Jack! To think of my precious Bob! Your letter is diplomatic, presenting to me first a picture of the happy little convalescent, with Molly, the captain, and yourself in attendance. And your account of the accident is decidedly meagre. You should have seen Maria's face when she asked if 'American fish often tasted little boys!'

Tom wants to know what we will take for the boys, and says he stands ready to make a considerable offer for them. He tells me to congratulate you that Captain Pepper was on hand with his slice of pork for Bob's leg, instead of the two French gentlemen who have been in attendance upon himself. He allowed them to come up-stairs yesterday, I am convinced for the express purpose of asking them what they thought of fresh pork applied to severe wounds. He seems to have lost all confidence in them now, and I don't know why he does not dismiss them. I am beginning to pity them just a little, he teases them so by asking the absurdest questions with the most perfect gravity. They do not in the least know what to make of him. When they were announced yesterday, he directed Antoine to put a cushion under his feet, a blanket over his knees, and to make him look generally like an invalid. Then he had the audacity to ask me if I thought he looked feeble enough to *gratify* them! I protested that he was doing wrong not to tell them honestly that he was getting well fast and did not need them. But he said he was not quite ready to do that.

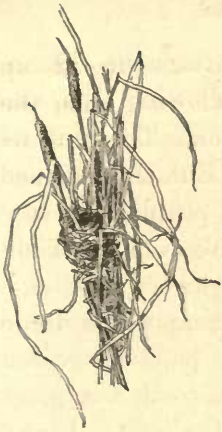
"No," he said; "I wish to be very feeble on this occasion, and I shall mention with anxiety

— let me see — the *reverse* action of my heart. I wonder how they 'll take that, Nelly! They have been a good deal concerned about my heart; let us see how they will like its reverse action. Call them up, Antoine!"

If Antoine understood English, or if Tom talked in this manner in Maria's presence, I should be more troubled.

While Mrs. Chezzle was writing the history of the day in her journal, Maria was sobbing violently in a big arm-chair in the library. It was a chilly evening, and Antoine had lighted the fire. But Maria did not see its cheerful glow or hear the crackle of the burning wood, or the step of somebody coming through the hall. She heard nothing but her own sobs until her father lifted her in his arms, and sitting down with her in the arm-chair, tried to find out what terrible sorrow was afflicting her. It took him some time to quiet her sufficiently to enable her to talk, and when Mr. Penroy discovered that the cause of her grief was the thought of her aunt's return to America, he made no attempt to reconcile her to so painful a prospect. It was a comfort to the child, however, to see her father also grieved over it. To be miserable together was

something. Mr. Penroy presently turned up the lights so that they could shine upon the beautiful portrait of Maria's mother, and returning to his former position, they continued their conversation for a long time. But the only consolation that produced any effect whatever upon Maria's spirits was her father's suggestion that perhaps, some day, they too would go to America.



XVII.

POSITIVELY THE LAST APPEARANCE IN THIS STORY OF THE DOCTORS AND THE MADAGASCARITES.

AUGUST 7. Tom begs me to report to you an amusing scene which we had this morning. He appointed his breakfast hour as the time for both doctors to make a visit which he decided should be their last. He grew impatient, however, and came down-stairs a little earlier to join Maria and me. His delight in sitting once more at the head of his own table in what he called "a respectable manner," with somebody to pour his coffee, lengthened the meal considerably. Maria, who knew the situation partially, was in a hurry for the doctors to appear, and could scarcely sit still.

"Ah, papa, you are so long!" she cried at last. "The bifftek — when will him be ate?"

"Him is ate now," said her father, laughing. "We will go into the parlor."

But the door-bell was ringing, and a moment

or two afterwards, to our amazement, Maria, who had disappeared, was showing the two doctors into the breakfast-room. They looked aghast as they saw Tom! But they looked more so, and Tom's face grew purple with suppressed laughter, as Maria broke out, with absolute innocence and in high glee:

"See! see, Messieurs! There was a large bifftek on that dish and my papa has eaten nearly all of it! And he has eaten a great many other ones too. And chickens! and soups! and he is all well! Are you not glad? We kept it for a great surprise for you! A great surprise! A great surprise!" she shouted, jumping up and down and clapping her hands. She took possession of the field, and in her excitement forgetting her dislike of the doctors, rattled off a volley of French which six weeks ago I could not possibly have understood. Nobody could get a word in sideways, or rather no one tried, for she was conducting the scene to perfection. Presently, however, when she was beginning, "And oh, Messieurs! Antoine is not a servant at all, he is a wonderful doctor, and *he* has made papa all well, and" — Tom thought it time to silence her.

"Never mind that part, little grasshopper," he said, laughing, leading the way into the parlor.

There we held the drollest conversation I ever heard. The doctors covered their embarrassment with a mild fit of coughing on Dr. Frédiqueue's part, and a great deal of silk pocket-handkerchief on Dr. De la Quille's. But they had some trouble in composing an explanation of their long course of treatment. They finally declared that their medicines were "*intended to make M. Pennaroi hungry — to produce an uncontrollable appetite!*" They professed the most unbounded joy at his recovery, and made a great to-do announcing that he would no longer require their professional services. Tom gave utterance to a surprised "oh!" at that, but when Dr. Frédiqueue proclaimed that they were 'proud and justly gratified at their complete success in curing him,' he could not repress an exclamation of "Thunder and Mars!" As they did not understand him, however, it made no difference.

In the midst of the interview a card had been handed to him by Antoine, and, looking at it now a second time, he turned the conversation into a new channel by asking the gentlemen if they objected to following him to the library in order to witness a certain deed of gift which, he said, would be quite complete with the addition only of their two signatures upon it.

Of course he meant the deed of gift for the Madagascar missionaries, and you can imagine the joy which flashed into the faces of the doctors at his speech. They could not repress murmurs of pleasure; they fairly purred with satisfaction all the way up-stairs. I confess I do not understand why Tom is convinced that the doctors are humbugs and yet seems to cling to his faith in the missionaries. They have all four been equally earnest about his gift. Why should he be so much impressed by M. Duvergne's discovery that the doctors have no standing whatever in the medical profession, and reject his discovery that the missionaries are impostors? If he cares so much for the Madagascarites, why were they not here this morning to witness his deed for him and receive his munificent gift?

But it is all none of my affair, and I will not ask Tom a question which might suggest that I am anxious or even interested in the disposition of his money. I would *rather* have him throw it away than think that!

The doctors were much annoyed and embarrassed to find M. Duvergne waiting for us in the library. I thought he scrutinized me a little and that he was thinking of the part of our first conversation which I had never reported to

Tom. At any rate *I* was thinking of it when I sat down at the desk to put my name on the blank space which Tom was indicating for me.

Tom asked if I objected to signing legal documents. I thought the doctors looked as if they hoped I did, so I dashed off my name with a particularly indifferent flourish and said I was ready to sign as many as the firm of Roubaix and Duvergne cared to produce. I do not understand business forms, Jack, and am glad that I am not obliged to. I had supposed that the two doctors and I were all to put our names upon the same paper as witnesses to whatever it contained. But the paper they signed was printed, while the one I signed was written — I recognized Tom's hand. Are deeds of gift written, Jack, or must they be printed? Never mind, though, I don't care for the answer. I have not the least idea what was on the paper which I signed, and I should think the doctors' knowledge of what they were about must have been misty. Perhaps it is not necessary for witnesses to know what they witness — is it? The poor doctors had rather a hard time, for they were painfully ill at ease with M. Duvergne. It was impossible for them to meet his steady, sharp gaze, and although they looked at the deed and appeared

to read some of it, I am sure they were thinking every minute of the lawyer. They were simply anxious to get out of his presence as soon as possible — I am sure of that. They signed their names in the most nervous haste, mumbled over a few phrases of which I caught only a word here and there, and bowed themselves out in a very short time.

Tom put the deed and my paper into his desk, and that is the last I have seen of either.

I wonder why M. Duvergne was so complacent through it all! He had protested so strongly against Tom's throwing away his money in the "Mad Mission" as he called it — had begged me to influence him at first, you know; yet he not only saw the deed completed without a word of opposition, but with what looked very like supreme satisfaction! Perhaps Tom has persuaded him that the mission is *not* such a fraudulent one, after all. He *may* have completely changed his mind. But I should think he would tell me, if that is the case, since he has said so much to me about their being impostors. He has been here every day and at all hours for the past week, but neither he nor Tom broach the subject of the missionaries in my presence. But I do not call this minding my own business with absolute consistency — do you?

M. Duvergne took Tom out to drive, and I went down-stairs, where I had the double pleasure of ordering lunch and dinner for all of us together, and of explaining to the cook the mystery of "M. le Duc D'Antoine's" enormous appetite.

Of course, John, it is quite true that Tom has been ill. He was undoubtedly very feeble when I first came, and much reduced; but M. Duvergne thinks he must have got over the worst then. We all think that nature had a hard fight against those wretched doctors. Tom and M. Duvergne think she would not have won the victory so easily if it had not been for — me, my dear! Antoine declares that it is I alone who have saved his master's life. I can't quite think that, but I am just a little — conceited, do you think? Well, perhaps.

No, I 'm not — I am very much so! — "Whew!" I can hear you exclaim, while you measure me under your chin after your favorite method, and make your pet speech about me: "You are little, Nelly, but you are *great!*" Ah! I 'd like to be under your chin, Jack, this very minute! My attack of conceit came on a little before one o'clock to-day, when Tom returned from his drive and said, the mo-

ment I appeared in the hall to help him with his wraps, "Nelly, you are a brick!"

"Thank you!" I answered. "Don't go upstairs, Tom, we shall have luncheon in a few minutes; your mail and newspaper are in the breakfast-room."

His answer was to put one hand on my head and to take hold of my chin with the other, turning my face up to have a deliberate look at it. "A brick!" he whispered pleasantly, smiling full upon me and bending down to kiss me.

I smiled back and said: "I am glad to hear it; I like my big brother to think I am a brick."

"You do!" he said, walking with me into the breakfast-room. "Well, he has thought so for some time, my dear. That Jack of yours is a lucky dog."

Maria's unmistakable ring at the front door vibrated through the house, but it did not interrupt Tom, I am sure; he would not have said another word. Maria came in like a fresh breeze, rosy and happy, with her hoop in her hand and so much to tell that she kept breaking out all through luncheon into little bursts of joyful talk, and that, with Tom's quiet humor, kept my wits busy.

"So, Maria, you too think your aunt is a brick?" said Tom.

"A prick? How can chère Tante be such a think?" asked Maria. "A prick wot is to puild a house kent be like to ma tante!"

"In America, my child," — Tom always begins with America when he wants to impress anything favorably upon Maria's mind, — "in America, my child," he said gravely, "the term 'brick' is applied to persons who have an unusual number of the cardinal virtues." To my relief, he added: "But it is an expression used only by gentlemen, Maria, and I would prefer not to have you adopt it."

August 9. I spend a good deal of time in my own sunny, beautiful sitting-room. I feel like a duchess in it, with its fine hangings, luxurious lounge, and easy-chairs. And the pictures in it are inspiring. There is a "Corot" over the fireplace, and a "Diaz" by the window, two of Gerard Dow's, — those engravings of "The Winder" and "The Reader," you know, and some etchings which I delight in. If I express a particular pleasure in any picture in the house, in Tom's hearing, I find it in my room the next day. So I am careful. This writing-desk I enjoy next to the pictures. It is of mahogany, beautifully carved, just the right height for me, and not too small.

The one thing out of harmony with the house's grandeur is the little woman just mentioned, whose figure I meet occasionally at one of the mirrors, which fortunately are few. She looks as if she had lost her way in somebody's palace. But she is honored like a queen in it, and if her big brother does not like her gowns, he has the good taste not to let her know it, and his little Maria thinks she is perfection just —

Evening. I was interrupted by Tom's rap, and he came in saying: "Nelly, bring out the picture of that everlasting Chezzle of yours; I want to see it again." And down he sat in the big chair by the window to study your physiognomy. I am quite used to Tom's abrupt ways, which might be called impulses except that they generally follow a good deal of thinking. His way is to "turn a thing over in his mind," as mother used to say, study it well, mention it, and do it immediately. So, when he asked for your picture in that way, I said to myself: "Now what has John got to do with it?" But I said nothing aloud. It was a damp, misty, drizzling day, so I lighted the fire. I leave the weather to take care of itself generally, and do not often notice its changes unless Tom comes along. After a few minutes

he leaned forward, his elbows on the arms of his chair, and, tapping his finger-tips with your photograph, said: "Is Chezzle a good business man, Nelly?"

"Of course," I answered.

"What do you call a good business man, madam?" he asked. He likes to call me "madam."

"If a man could not get any work to do except to sweep the streets for a living, I should call him a good business man if he was proud to do *that* and did it as well as it could be done," I answered.

"Good!" said Tom. "Chezzle is that sort? Then he *can* get something better."

"He supports his family, sends his children to a good school, and would lie awake at night if he owed anybody twenty-five cents which he could not pay," I remarked.

"Then he is a capital business man. Is he obliging?" said Tom.

"You said he was, when he spared me to come here," was all I said.

"And the same thing proves him to be unselfish — the more so, that he thought I was a poor man. One more question, Nelly," he said, changing his seat to an arm-chair beside me. "If he was *not* perfect, would you let me or anybody else find it out?"

"No!" I said, very loud for me.

"I thought so," he said, flipping the photograph lightly down my face with his fascinating impudence. Then, tossing it upon a table, he stretched back, with hands clasped behind his head, and said: "Did you ever hear, Nelly, of two men who made, each, an enormous fortune — one, by minding his own business, and the other by letting that of his neighbors alone? No? That is strange — you and your Jack remind me so of both of them. You 'll be wealthy people some day, if your husband is like you in this particular, my dear."

It was such an idle thought of his! My mind went so completely over to you in your little "three-pair-back," working over your accounts and trying to make the smallest kind of a balance in your own favor, that, before I knew it, Tom was behind my chair, scratching my forehead with his rough chin and saying, with rare tenderness: "Why, Nelly! Nelly! How quickly your eyes can travel across the Atlantic! Bring them back and don't let them wander again, little sister, for we are going to talk business. For once, your want of curiosity is provoking; why don't you ask what has started me to inquire so much about your husband all at once?"

I laughed and said, no doubt he would tell me, if he wanted me to know. His answer took my breath away. You know more than I do, probably, about it all, by this time, Jack. "My child," he said, "you have become necessary to my little Maria and me. It would be unreasonable to expect us to do without you. The advantage to Maria of remaining in your vicinity, the companionship of the middies and an 'Oncle Chon,' as she calls him — everything demands that we shall all go to America together!"

I was speechless with the glad bewilderment of it all. But Tom went on; he said he thought I "had better take the whole dose at once and have it over with!" "I have written to your husband, Nelly, asking him to take a cottage for me in Nipsit, where we will go direct, and stay a month while we are choosing a suitable place on which to build a summer home. And all the rest will follow, my dear! There!" he exclaimed when he had finished, making me stand up and taking me by the shoulders to face the mirror; "you will oblige me very considerably if you will take *that* face home to your 'Jack' and the middies!"

XVIII.

CLOSE OF MRS. CHEZZLE'S JOURNAL.

AUGUST 13. Maria sings all over the house. The confusion made by the dismantling, packing, boxing, and sending off of the goods and chattels just suits her. But the things she produces to be packed suit me by no means. Her one idea of preparing to go to America is to collect things to take to her cousins. Her talk is all "my cousins," and, if she could have her way, she would empty the toy-shops for them. But I have finally persuaded Tom to set a limit to her purchases and to draw the line at a pair of wooden ele-

phants almost big enough for the boys to ride. Maria cried so at being refused permission to order them sent that Tom came to me last night, after she had gone to sleep, quite distressed about it. "But I won't go back on you, Nelly," he said; "and what I say I'll stick to."

So, as Maria understands that her father's decisions, once made, are final, she had her cry, and there the matter ended. She is sunnier and happier than ever to-day. Tom leaves more decisions to me than I quite care for. As, for instance, the question of servants. Antoine is to go with us, and Madeleine, the cook. For the others, I have persuaded him that Boston has resources. Certainly nobody can prepare the Nipsit cottage for us better than Molly and Katy Dolan. This house is to be vacated in a few days, and we are to spend the interval until the 22d at some hotel in Paris.

I hope I have not written so much about Tom that you 'll hate him! Or talked so much about you to him that he 'll never become acquainted with you! I have tried not to fling your virtues at each other, and I don't think I can have done much harm. I don't see how any reasonable being could be disappointed in Challey and Bob, under any circumstances. I

am not at all worried about Maria. She is so delighted at the mere possession of us all, that her castles will not easily tumble. Her talk about "Shallee an' Pob" is incessant, and Tom likes to show her your picture, and ask if she knows whose it is, for the fun of hearing her say, "Mon Oncle Tchonne Tche-zelle," as if she were going to sneeze. I wonder what she will do when she finds herself, this dainty little Parisienne, face to face with the rough-and-tumbleness of our two happy-hearted boys. But her admiration for them is born of a hunger for companionship, and I am not troubled.

—— Hotel, Paris, August 17, Evening.

And I shall see you and my boys in about two weeks! It seems too good to be true. Maria is irrepressible in her joy. Everything in the way of preparation seems complete, and Tom's house is in the hands of agents, for sale. We spend all our time now in sight-seeing. Tom teases me delightfully. He declares that I will not remember a single picture in the Louvre, that my rapt expression is simply because my mind is wandering, and that he is sure I see nothing on the canvases but the faces of Challey and Bob and "that tiresome Jack!"

I have just had the most entertaining conversation with him upon a new subject — clothes. After Maria had gone to bed, we were sitting in our parlor, pretty tired of course, reading. Tom suddenly threw down his newspaper and exclaimed: "See here, Nelly, you are a woman!"

"Yes, Tom," I said.

"Well then," he continued, "I suppose you want to spend *some* time in the shops — dressmakers, milliners, gimcracks, and that sort of thing."

"No I don't, Tom," I answered.

"Give me your purse, madam, and tell me no lies!" he said, sternly, reaching his hand across the table.

"I don't tell lies, and I won't give you my purse," I said, quietly. "With only a week before me for the Louvre, I would not use up my precious hours in shops for the trousseau of a duchess — unless," I added, "you are ashamed of my appearance, Tom."

"Thank heaven!" he exclaimed, taking up the paper again. "I am sorry, though, that you are not more obedient when I ask for your purse," he said, scowling at me. "I shall report you to Jack!" Then he went off into a brown study, looking at me with what he meant

for a severe expression, and repeating several times: "To Jack, madam! To Jack!" But there was a look of intense amusement all about his eyes and mouth.

August 19. Three days more! The last of my journal will be mailed to-morrow, and when you read it you will be watching the papers for news of our steamer. It has been a queer sort of journal to read, has n't it? It might have been written from anywhere, and is all about people. Well, after all, are not people the best part of the world? Is even the Louvre as interesting as a newly found brother and little niece? And how could I work myself up into a state of excitement over Paris and its suburbs while I was living in such a story as the history of these two months past? Perhaps, when I am in my own dear home again, when we will have grown used to having Tom and Maria near us, you and I will croon of an evening by the sitting-room fire, and my mind will travel back here again for your entertainment. But, from your account of the Macksbys, it will take some time for either of our minds to get away from our immediate surroundings. Poor Jack! I did not dare to tell you before I came away that Mrs. Macksby's back hair was tied with an old

shoe-string! I knew then what was before you, and thought it would be merciful to let it come gradually.

Only — prepare for an awful, monstrous scolding, Jack! How *could* you, in your last letter, draw such a melancholy picture of the contrast between "the elegance of Tom's grand house at Meaux, and the disheartening aspect of things at home"? You will have that question to answer face to face, sir! *Home* disheartening! And what is all Tom's luxury compared with my pride in what is my own? Just wait until Molly with her scrubbing-brushes, and I with my wits, get to work! And don't I know, too, that you 'll take a turn yourself with hammer and nails and furniture polish? And then won't I flourish the feather duster over your head!

XIX.

MR. CHEZZLE IS MORE DAZED BY A SHORT LETTER FROM MR. PENROY THAN HE EVER WAS BEFORE. THE WORK THE LETTER GAVE HIM TO DO.

"I THINK I drew it mildly when I wrote to Nelly," Mr. Chezzle thought to himself as he was walking down town one morning. "Poor little wife! I don't want her to discover it *all* at once — the shock would be awful. To come home from such a life and encounter Mrs. Macksby at the front door! And, as for Macksby, a back view of him is enough for me! If ever there was a person with 'incapable' stamped all over him, Macksby's the man." Mr. Chezzle said "Whew!" aloud, and took off his hat to wipe his forehead. Then he went on with his thinking in this fashion: "I

wonder what Nelly will do! The condition of the carpets alone is enough to take away the courage of a woman. Any woman but Nelly. Bright little Nell! She 'll mend the rags, and think up a rug or two to cover the stains that won't come out; she says I tell her to 'think up' things that we need as if she had Aladdin's lamp." Nobody, seeing Mr. Chezzle's pleased expression, would have suspected that he was thinking of anything dreary, certainly. But the smiles were where "Nelly" came in. His face was cloudy again in a minute as he entered the banking-house.

"What 's up, Chezzle?" asked Mr. Ruggett, one of the clerks, and a confidential friend of Mr. Chezzle's. "Has anything happened?"

"No; I wish it would!" said Mr. Chezzle, hanging his hat up.

"That sounds as if the situation was rather a bad one," said his friend.

"Ruggett," said Mr. Chezzle, a little desperately, "the situation is simply this: my wife's brother is getting well so fast that she may come home any time now, and — before that innocent woman sets eyes on the interior of that house in Roxbury, I 'd like — I believe I 'd like to put a barrel of dynamite in the cellar and blow it up! And I don't know as I 'd

be over-particular about the Macksby family getting out of the way — altogether!"

Mr. Ruggett laughed. "I ask your pardon, old fellow," he said; "but how can you expect me to help it? When things get so bad as that, what can you do? You can't help yourself, and you might as well give up and enjoy it."

"The giving up is easy enough!" said Mr. Chezzle. "I did that last night, when I trod on some bread and butter on the hall-floor. It is n't so easy to enjoy it. I 've been trying all summer to patch up and coax things along; kept hammer and tacks handy, so that I could nail down the stair-carpet any time, and carried a screwdriver in my pocket. But — Ruggett, when I trod on that bread and butter, I kicked the plate down the kitchen stairs, and felt like getting the hatchet and chopping down the banisters!"

"Well, there is some comfort in seeing a thing done thoroughly!" said Mr. Ruggett. "Can't you do something? Can't you force your tenants to pay for damages? Are they ugly?"

"Ugly?" asked poor Mr. Chezzle. "They have n't character enough! And pay for damages? They have n't got the money. Ten to

one if I get the rent. I did venture to protest once or twice, but — you would n't ask such idiotic questions, Ruggett, if you had ever seen Mr. Macksby's back ! "

" Talk of something else, then," said Mr. Ruggett. " Here 's the postman."

Most of the letters were for the officers of the House ; there was only one for Mr. Chezzle.

Mr. Ruggett had never seen so extraordinary a change come over the spirit of his friend as took place within the next five minutes.

Mr. Chezzle, after reading his letter, which was very short, over several times, let his arm drop at his side and said, " George ! "

" It looks as if the scene had shifted," said his friend.

" Well, it has — rather ! " said Mr. Chezzle, brightly. " Listen to this, Ned : instead of Nelly's coming home to the Macksby mansion, she 's to come to the best furnished cottage I can hire in Nipsit, and is to bring the whole caboodle along with her ! Her brother and his little daughter and two French servants ! I 'm to look out for a shipload or two of boxes which are on the water now, and the letter tops off with a check for a thundering amount ' to pay expenses and in case of duties at the Custom House,' etc."

"And, for the present at least," said Mr. Ruggett, cheerfully, "the Macksby family may go to grass?"

"Exactly!" said Mr. Chezzle. "And — would you mind just locating my head for me, Ruggett?"

With such agreeable responsibilities to overshadow his cares it was easy for a methodical man like Mr. Chezzle to attend to his business through the day. When the closing hour came, he made arrangements for an absence of a few days, and returned to Roxbury in a very different frame of mind than he had been in when he left it in the morning.

Molly and Katy Dolan agreed to be prepared to go to Nipsit whenever he should summon them, and were much set up at the idea of working for awhile in company with Mr. Penroy's French servants.

"Although," said Molly, "I 'd be partickler to have Misther Pinrye understand himsilf that it 's to yous an' Mrs. Chizzle an' the byes that me sarvice is engaged parmy-nintly, do ye take it in Mr. Chizzle-sir what it is I 'm a-sayin'?"

"Certainly, Molly; we could not get along without you," Mr. Chezzle assured her.

"Thin it 's a bargin!" said Molly, cheerfully, adding, with a twinkle in her eyes, "an'

a foine opporchunity it 'll be far me to improve mesilf in the Frinch language!"

If it had not been for those boats, the "Maria Pepper" and the "Thomas Antoinette," it might not have created any extraordinary excitement to have the Hubble cottage hired by Mr. Chezzle for Mr. Penroy. But the boats had made the names of "Uncle Tom" and "Cousin Maria" famous to every child in Nipsit. The Chezzle boys had risen to great importance in the youthful community, and the arrival of a gentleman who had sent such magnificent gifts to them was regarded as a most momentous event. His very name was reported to be "Pennyroyal" and seemed to have a comforting sound.

On the morning when the travelers were to arrive in Nipsit, Molly and Katy Dolan were busy getting dinner ready for them. Now even a Thanksgiving dinner for the Chezzle family was an undertaking which Molly felt equal to, but here was a meal to prepare for "a double family, Katy Dolan, and half o' thim Frinch!"

"How do ye make that out, Mary Ann?" asked Katy. "Isn't Mr. Pinrye Mrs. Chizzle's natural-born-brother, an' the childern all blood-related no more an' no less?"

"Sure an' don't I know that?" said Molly, turning the cake in the oven. "But there 's more behind it all, Katy."

"If ye mane the Frinch cook an' waiter-bye, now, it 's more than they 'll find thimsilves aqual to, if they think they can put *me* about, an' I tell ye that, free of charge, Mary Ann Dolan!"

"Och now Cathern McFarly, don't be shart-sighted!" said Molly. "It 's not the hilp, it 's Mr. Pinrye I 'm thinkin' about. It 's he that 's been in every known land all over the wurreld a-thravelin' amongst lards an' ladies an'" —

"An' supposin' he has, Mary Ann?" said Katy, who was making pastry, and stopped to roll her sleeves up a little higher.

Molly was a little anxious about Katy, who, she thought, was not sufficiently impressed with the seriousness of the occasion.

"An' ye don't see the impartance of supposin' he has, Katy Dolan?" she asked. Then she added, solemnly: "Oh Katy! Katy me child, listen to me now whilst I tell yez. There's Mr. Pinrye been inhabitin' every known land, as I was a-sayin', till he 's well acquainted this minute with all the languages ever was spoke, an' there 's not the bit o' mate, nor the article in anny o' the cookery books; no, not the

petaty that he 'd see put on the table and not know, as quick as his eye rested on it, whether it was cooked in accordance wid the Frinch nation or the English" — Molly had picked up a long basting-spoon and marked off each nation with a wave of it — " or the I-talien, or the Chi-nese, or the — the Parchy-geese " (she was delighted to have thought of them) " or the — the — the rest o' them all ! " with a wave of the spoon which took in the world at large.

" Well, what o' that? " asked Katy, balancing a pie on one hand while she neatly trimmed off the superfluous dough. " There 's wan thing he 'll do annyhow."

" An' what 's that ? " asked Molly.

" Why," said Katy, with a twinkle in her eye, " whether he brings wid him a Frinch, or a Dutch, or a Christian or a haythen appetite, it 's an *American* male he 'll put into himsilf ! "

" Mind yer wit now, and kape it for yer own convanience, Katy Dolan ! " said Molly, laughing in spite of herself. " An' mind another thing too, if ye know where ye are ! Kape yer eyes in yer head an' yer ears where they belong, Katy dear, an' whin the furrin help comes, be ready to pick up all the knowledge ye 'll find lyin' round. For there 's no sinse in Mrs.

Chizzle's own brother kapin' the shtyle all to himsilf. So, mark what I 'm sayin'— if he 's comin' here to bring along wid him anny high, furrin juke-ways — *we* 'll have them same in the Chizzle family."

Katy responded to this idea very promptly. "That 's me own mind too, Molly," she said. "We 'll show the Frinchies the high-standing o' the Chizzle family in no time at all. Only I 'm thinkin' it 's not juke-ways at-all-at-all that the two byes 'll be showin' off ther' bettermost Bobby himself most partickerlar!"

"Let the byes alone to show for themselves," said Molly. "It 's not half an eye the cook an' waiter-bye 'll have betwixst thim if they can't see that it's Challey an' little Bob as has n't their aqual in anny place. But what are we thinkin' of? Ain't they comin' this blesséd day an' ain't the time a-flyin'?"

On her way through the kitchen-wing Molly saw Captain Pepper coming across the grass and stept out upon the piazza to meet him with a pleasant "Good-morning, Captain Pepper-sir!"

"Good-morning!" said the captain, a little dolefully. "I found a slice and dogs in my back attic," setting down a long-handled fire-shovel and pair of quaint iron andirons, "and

I thought maybe Mrs. Chezzle 'd like 'em. Tell her they 're a present, will you?" The captain was looking out to sea, as he added: "I 'm thinking about goin' to the Vineyard this morning, and, if there 's any"—

"Whatever do ye mane, Captain Pepper-sir?" exclaimed Molly. "To be goin' to Marther's Vineyard *to-day*, wid the stage-coach an' Mrs. Chizzle an' her husbant an' all o' them comin'? An' ain't ye falin' well, Captain Pepper-sir?"

"Well maybe I 'm a little mauger," he answered. "I think I 'll go, the tide 's good, and" —

"Come in! Come in till I git yez a cup o' tay," said Molly, anxiously. She had never seen the captain so dejected and she was troubled. "Will ye have that nayther? No? Thin come in till ye jist rest a bit — do now! No? Thin stop till ye do somethin' far me."

This plea induced the captain to follow Molly into the parlor.

"There!" she said, drawing out an old-fashioned rocking-chair; "sit down now!"

"Oh no, I 'll stand. I 'm not so bad as that yet. What can I do for you?"

"Do far me? Well, it 's not for me so much as it 's for the family," said Molly, in-

geniously, for she had guessed by this time what was the trouble with the captain. Looking around the room to try and discover some excuse for requiring his services, her eye lighted upon the fire-board, and she bethought herself of his gift of the andirons, and said:

"If I knew just how, I'd like to fix up the fireplace wid a little fire all ready to light — the way Mrs. Chizzle's heart 'll warm up to it like. An' I was hopin' ye 'd look afther the byes a" —

"The boys?" asked the captain, a little sadly. "I don't know what the boys 'll want with me! I've just taken down their beds, and strapped up their trunks; I'll wheel 'em over in the barrow 'fore noon. My cruise with the boys is over!"

"Over is it?" said Molly, gayly. "Go 'long Captain Pepper-sir, I 'm sorry far yez! If ye 're in expectaytion that them byes are done trackin' up yer settin'-room kyarpet, ye 're dramin'. I thocht ye knew better than that, I did now! They 'll be hangin' round yez like — like jist themsilves thin an' nothing else, barrin' the wood-ticks that gets clawed into them."

"You think so?" said the captain. "Well, your opinion counts, Molly. But I 'll own up to you, without tackin', that it was like a funeral

to take down those two bunks! I felt like reading the service!"

"The sarvice!" said Molly, laughing outright. "Well, don't read it till I git time to listen to yez, for I 'd like to perfarm high mass afther it!"

Molly was a capital antidote for low spirits. "I won't," the captain said, more brightly. "Those little chaps have been more than company for me, an' my flag is clear down at half mast at the thought of parting with 'em. Ye want that fire-board down? All right! I reckon I 'll wait a couple o' tides before I go to the Vineyard!"

He set to work at the fireplace while Molly went about the house putting finishing touches everywhere and singing her Irish songs upstairs and down. The captain was thinking, "That 's done; what next?" when there was a rush of legs across the piazza and Challey appeared, panting, and with trouble on his countenance, saying: "I say, Cap'm Pepper, ain't it just mean? Bob has gone and" —

"Haul in! Haul in an' drop anchor a minute, chap, till ye get yer wind an' start fair. There — so!" said the captain, taking Challey up bodily, turning him upside-down, right again, and setting him on his feet, — a favorite

trick of his when he saw trouble brewing with the boys. He used to say that 'it made the temper spill overboard, turned the tide, and started 'em on a new tack.'

But Challey's temper did not spill overboard this time. He came up with a decided thundercloud on his face, and broke out in an excited and injured tone: "I say it 's mean! And it is n't a bit fair of Bob! He 's been and gone and got the biggest wheelbarrow an' he 's loading it with all his might with the things that belong in my own corner of the shop and he 's going to carry his pile of shavings and mine too, and all the chips you gave us, over to Uncle Tom's big shed and — no, I don't want to be put upside-down — the chips you gave me for my very own because he says you won't let us keep our things over to your place any more, and the other boys and I have got the 'Maria Pepper' and the 'Thomas Antynette' by your front gate, and Bob 's going to take his boat to Uncle Tom's gate and" —

"And it 's blowin' gales and hurricanes enough to take our ears off!" cried the captain, catching Challey up by the middle of his body and walking off with him under one arm. "We 'll right the sails in no time at all an' satisfy the crew, if possible!"

The crew was satisfied in about two minutes. The captain gave them hearty permission to continue in possession of their pet corners in his carpenter-shop, and Bob unloaded the wheelbarrow on the spot.

"Hurrah! That 's just gullorious!" said Challey. "Our shop 's a lot better than Uncle Tom's!"

"I know that!" said Bob, from behind as many shavings as his arms could hold. "I don't *want* to go over there at all, only I thought we 'd got to. And if you 've got to do a thing, Challey, why you 've got to!"

"I know that, Bob," said Challey. "But you 're all for doing it right off, and *I* want to be *pop sure* I 've got to before I go at it!"

"Well, we have n't got to this time, anyhow. Won't it be fun to come over here every morning?" said Bob.

"Yes, like men going to work," said Challey. "Now my things are fixed just the way I want papa and mamma and Uncle Tom and Maria and the French waiter and cook to see them. Don't you touch 'em again, Bob! Now I 'm going to take the carriage to get Ranna in," saying which, he hurried away with the clumsy wheelbarrow wobbling behind him.

He soon came back, harnessed to it, in the

character of a pony, with Alex Tuckit for the "off" horse and Ranna driving them. She looked paler than she used to, but smiling and merry. They stopped at the gate where the boats were stationed in all the glory of hoisted sails and flying colors.

The boys had planned a reception of the travelers at this spot. Ranna was to sit in the wheelbarrow, like a little queen, with cushions and a gay shawl, provided by Mrs. Barnes, for her feet. She was content to let Challey do what he liked with her, and submitted to being lifted off her throne, dumped back again, stationed anywhere, or trundled about. She was finally left between the gate-posts, one of which Bob clapped his hands on, exclaiming: "I speak for this!"

"All right!" said Challey. "Then I'll take the other." It was only an hour before the coach would be due, but the boys considered that it was time to begin to watch for it.

Children collected from all sides, but Elva Tuckit took care of them, setting them to play games and managing to keep the space free in front of Ranna, that she might look on and enjoy it all.

Challey and Bob were too much excited to join in the games, and spent the hour in arrang-

ing, over and over again, the sails and rigging of the boats, and in climbing the gate-posts where they stood at intervals, like sentinels, with the American and French flags which they waved vigorously over the head of the bright little mute who looked up and swung her arms in high glee, without the faintest idea of what it was all about.

XX.

WATCHING FOR THE NIPSIT COACH.

FOR it 's not two, but it 's twinty legs that bye has! For his mother's sake, run save *some* o' them, Captain Pepper-sir lookat!" cried Molly, in great distress. The coach was in sight, and Bob was climbing his post. Challey and he were roaring, with all their mights, for the captain to come too. His "cruise over with the boys"? What nonsense! They could not greet the coach without him.

Of course it stopped at the gate. Mrs. Chezzle got out of it, the boys were on the ground in a flash, and the flags of the two nations would have been trampled under foot if Alex Tuckit and Jim Holburn had not caught them.

It was a wonder how Mrs. Chezzle ever got her breath again after that first hug! For there were two boys to give it to her, and it was a double, tumbling, grasping, clasping hug

of a mighty order! But they came out of it safely. Uncle Tom towsled the heads and lifted each of the boys up to a level with his kind, brown eyes, by way of an embrace. When he set them down again, they exchanged shy glances with Maria, who, keeping fast hold of her aunt's dress, did not know whether she was most frightened or pleased to find herself suddenly set down in the midst of such a crowd of children. Mrs. Chezzle could not help her, because she had to reach across half a dozen heads to shake hands with Captain Pepper and present him to her brother. They could not go into the house without recognizing the group of interested little spectators. So Uncle Tom said "Halloa!" several times, in the most gratifying manner, took suitable notice of the boats, and bowed acknowledgments for both Maria and himself when Challey led off "three cheers for the 'Thomas Antynette' and the 'Maria Pepper'!"

Then Uncle Tom wanted to know whose bright eyes those were peering at him from under the flags which Alex and Jim had allowed to droop so that they nearly covered little Ranna in the wheelbarrow. That made Challey and Bob dive in among the children to either side of Ranna and present her.

"See, mamma! See, Uncle Tom and Maria. This is Ranna!" cried Challey, waving the children aside to let his mother and Maria draw near.

A pretty little minute happened just then. Ranna looked up straight into Maria's eyes, and Maria, looking down and meeting that quiet, wistful, searching look, felt as if her heart had suddenly grown too big, and with infinite tenderness held out her arms. Ranna sprang to her feet and stood an instant motionless on her wheelbarrow; then she seemed to laugh all over her little body as she threw herself upon Maria's breast. It was only a minute, but it gave birth to a friendship which was to last a lifetime, and which opened for Ranna a new world.

Then Maria went into the house with her cousins, Alex wheeled Ranna home, and the crowd scattered, leaving nobody there but Mr. Chezzle and Captain Pepper getting the last of the parcels and shawls out of the coach.

It did not make a bit of difference what they had for dinner. So far from knowing how it was cooked, Mr. Thomas Penroy knew nothing about it, and for his life could not have told the nationality of his appetite! After the meal was over the grown folks had so much to say

to one another and so many details to arrange that the children were thrown entirely upon their own resources. The boys screwed up their courage to ask Maria to go with them down to the beach to see the "Luella" and Captain Pepper, but as soon as they had her all to themselves they were abashed.

While she was getting her hat they waited on the piazza.

"Challey, you talk French to her!" whispered Bob. But Challey called to Elva Tuckit, who was passing by, and pulled his big straw hat far down over his eyes as soon as he heard Maria coming.

"Please come with us, Elva, and don't go away," he whispered entreatingly. Elva was enchanted.

Challey could introduce Ranna in the midst of the crowd, because mamma was there, and the boys, and everybody. But he could not possibly introduce Elva and Maria now! So they all walked along without a word.

Elva lagged a little so as to get a view of Maria from behind. Certainly, she thought little Miss Penroy was not like any child in Nipsit. She was far more beautiful and walked like a fairy. Elva tried to imitate her, but her feet were too clumsy. She heaved a sigh

and wished she had the baby so that she would know what to do with her hands. Poor, honest, simple-hearted Elva! If she had but known it, Maria was more abashed than any of the children. She was ashamed of both her French and her imperfect English and did not utter a word. Bob ran a few steps in advance, walked ahead, joined Challey and his cousin for a minute, then lagged behind with Elva, taking in Maria from every point of view.

"I thought Challey and you talked French," Elva whispered. "Why don't you do it now?"

"I 'm goin' to; who 's afraid?" said Bob. He edged up to Maria, kept step with her for a rod, then suddenly looked at her and exclaimed: "Pollyvoo Frongsay dunnymoy-dy-burrseelvooplay that 's all *I* know!" and turned a somersault.

It was the best thing he could have done, under the circumstances, and it broke the ice immediately.

"Oh!" exclaimed Maria, anxiously. "Haf you tummle town?"

The children all laughed at the idea, Bob loudest.

Seeing that he was not hurt, Maria smiled and asked: "Iss that nice sai-lore talk you say to me?"

The children laughed again, and Bob shouted: "No; it's French!" Then Maria laughed aloud, took two little skips, and said: "Tell it me more — will it?"

Bob repeated the somersault, not the French.

"Oh!" cried Maria again. "You will preak the pones off the head!"

"Oho-ho! Break his head! No, he won't — see!" cried Challey, instantly imitating Bob in an alarming manner. It took a great many somersaults to teach Maria that they were not dangerous to life and limb. The boys thought she had better learn at once, in spite of Elva's protestations. But the result was satisfactory so far as helping to get them acquainted with one another.

An hour or so later, coming back into the house, the children found nobody about but Mr. Penroy, sitting by the fire which was crackling peacefully on Captain Pepper's old andirons. Maria, delighted with a little Shaker arm-chair which she spied in a corner, placed it on the hearth-rug and ran up-stairs to get Marguérite. Challey and Bob waited in the entry a moment to take a private view of their uncle through the crack of the door.

He considerately allowed them to think he was unconscious of the fact, until Challey, who

was uppermost, bore down rather heavily upon his little brother and caused him to give a snort altogether too loud to ignore. Challey burst out laughing, but Bob was furious and cried out: "There! You jammed me right into the crack, Challey, and you very nearly pinched my nose off — you know you did! I 'll" —

"Come in, shavers!" said Uncle Tom, holding his hand out invitingly to them. "Did you really get hurt?" he asked, with some concern, as Bob entered the room, still holding on to his nose, and scowling. Challey said quietly: "Of course he did n't. If he had, he 'd have screamed so you 'd 'a' jumped out of your chair like a scarecrow. What are you holding on to your nose for, Bob?"

"'Cause I 'm just glad I 've got it, and that 's why; and I 'm glad *I* did n't be impolite and call Uncle Tom a scarecrow!" said Bob.

"Oh, I don't mind that," said his uncle, while Challey blushed scarlet. "It would be quite an accomplishment, Bob, if I could jump like a scarecrow. I should like to know how, amazingly. But come here, both of you; I want to know something. Tell me what you wish I had brought you in one of those great boxes out in the barn."

"Hew-ee!" cried Bob, getting astride of

his uncle's knee. "What *I* want would n't go inside of them if they were all made into one box!"

"Would n't it, indeed?" asked Uncle Tom, making big eyes at Bob while he drew Challey to a seat upon his other knee. "What can it be?"

"Why," said Bob, eagerly, "I want a big, three-masted war-vessel, with a hundred guns, to give to Captain Pepper all for his own so that he could beat the British all to nothing."

"Ah!" said Uncle Tom. "Well, we must consider that. And what do you wish I had brought you, Challey-boy?"

"What I *really* want, Uncle Tom," said Challey, confidentially, "is a pair of topen-lift halyards to fasten up my trousers."

"Top and — what?" asked Uncle Tom.

"Topen-lift-halyards," repeated Challey. "You see, Uncle Tom, my trousers button onto my shirt-waist, but *I* think I 'm old enough to wear halyards."

Uncle Tom still looked puzzled, so Bob struck in: "Crissy Jones calls 'em galluses, but Challey means s'penders."

"You see," pursued Challey, "the topen-lift rope on a sailboat goes from the cabin-door, across deck and up the mast and over the sail

and down, back to the tiller. Now," — he slid off his uncle's knee and lifted up his jacket to explain better, — "the buttons behind are the tiller-cleats, and the buttons before are the other cleats, and" —

"I see, perfectly," said Uncle Tom. "If I can only remember, I shall never mention suspenders again! And you shall have a pair of topen-lift halyards, without the shadow of a doubt. Of course, Bob, if Captain Pepper feels as you do, we 'll have to charter a war-ship from the government."

"Hurrah!" shouted Bob, sure of the vessel from that moment. "Then we can all go on a whaling voyage in it; will you go too, Uncle Tom?"

"Well, I don't quite like to promise that," said Mr. Penroy. "If I went, I should be afraid the whale would get *me*, instead of my getting *him!* He might be like that shar" —

"Now look here, Uncle Tom!" interrupted Challey, hastily. "That dog-shark was all right when he bit Bob! A fish has got a right to bite if you catch him by the tail! He 's got a right to do it, anyway, if he can!"

"Yes," screamed Bob; "but you need n't be afraid, Uncle Tom! *I* know what to do well enough when I catch the *next* one! Hm!

'deed I do! That fellow did n't bite me for nothing!"

"How will you manage next time?" asked Uncle Tom, much interested.

"Why!" said Bob, confidentially, pantomiming the act with his small fists, "I 'd *catch him by the gills!* Hm! I tell *you* he could n't bite then! I asked Captain Pepper, and he said so too."

Uncle Tom's eyes expressed a good deal, but he did not say anything. In a moment or two Maria came singing down the stairs, and, taking possession of the Shaker chair, asked her father to tell a story, and he entertained the children until tea was announced.

When bedtime came, Bob told his mother all about the war-vessel which Uncle Tom was going to give to Captain Pepper.

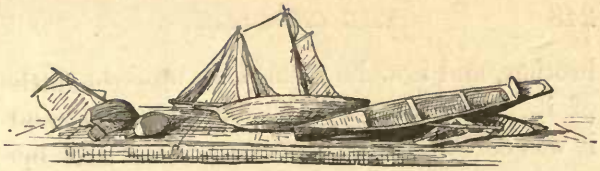
"And if the British *do* make a war and come to Nipsit, won't they catch it, though!" he said. "You need n't laugh, mamma; Uncle Tom did n't."

"No," said Challey; "that 's just the most splendid thing about him. He knows exactly what a boy wants, too!"

Mrs. Chezzle began to lecture the boys on the impropriety of asking Uncle Tom for things, but she soon found that she had no

cause for anxiety, and, after kissing the little faces snuggled into their pillows, she went down-stairs with such a bright face that her brother exclaimed once more 'how astonishingly becoming the middies were to the little mother.'

The lights were out at an early hour all over the cottage. Up in the top window of the kitchen wing Molly's candle was the last one to be seen. As she extinguished it she remarked to Katy, who was half asleep: "I 've larned the two names o' thim, annyhow. It 's '*Ong-twong*' they call the waiter-bye, and it 's nothing but 'Mad Lane' they call the cook! Sure it 's the craziest language ivver invinted. It 's only jist a mixin' of the Chinee an' the Lunytic Asylum. Katy, me chilt, I think I 'll not throuble mesilf to larn Frinch at all, for ther 's not a grain o' sinse in it!"



XXI.

MR. CHEZZLE CONVINCES HIS WIFE THAT THE PENROYS' NEIGHBORS ARE CHARMING PEOPLE.

BY the middle of October there were a number of questions which puzzled Mrs. Chezzle. Her brother had devoted many days to traveling over Boston in search of a suitable house to purchase. Whenever her husband could get away from business, he had accompanied Mr. Penroy, and they had driven nobody knows how many miles in coupés, cars, and, in the emergency, had even bumped around in a herdic — an experience to which Mrs. Chezzle had supposed her brother would never submit. A house had finally been selected on Marlborough Street, and Antoine had been established in it to superintend the unpacking of the things sent from Nipsit and to conduct the setting of it in order.

All that was simple enough, but Mrs. Chezzle had expected to be consulted more. Heretofore her counsel had been necessary to her

brother, and now he seemed to want very little of it. Of course her husband was wiser, and it was certainly a pleasure to see the two men grow more and more intimate and take to each other, just as she had hoped they would. That was so satisfactory that she was quite content at not being invited to accompany them on their house-hunting expeditions. But when the house was decided upon, she was surprised at not being asked to look at it even, before it was purchased. And nothing was said about its distance from the little house in Roxbury. Certainly, with all the labor of tidying-up after the Macksby family, she could not be expected to make frequent visits away off in Marlborough Street. Her brother had thought her influence of the greatest importance to Maria, and now he was putting half Boston between them. He must be intending to have a governess for the child again, but she would miss "Chère Tante" terribly. And "Chère Tante" had grown so fond of her niece that it would come very hard to part with her. Tom had made so much of the boys too — it was strange for him to plan deliberately to have Maria live three miles away from them. Mrs. Chezzle wondered if her brother had perceived faults in the characters of Challey and Bob which he was afraid

Maria might imitate. But that was impossible! "Tom cannot have settled upon an idea so utterly absurd as *that*," she decided, and put the thought out of her mind.

What puzzled her as much as anything was that her husband should set so light a value as he appeared to upon all these considerations. Jack was almost provoking. He was so enthusiastic about the prettiness and convenience of the interior of the house, that he would not give any importance whatever to its location, and, when his wife hinted that her brother and niece would be lonely at such a distance from them, he only talked about some delightful neighbors who would be next door. In fact, Mrs. Chezzle got a little tired of hearing about those neighbors and one day protested, saying, with some spirit: "But they are *not* going to take the place of near relations, John! How can you be sure that an exclusive fellow like Tom is going to get acquainted all at once? And how do you know they are delightful?" And she thought to herself that his reasoning was "just like a man!"

But he answered good-naturedly: "Oh, I think I can tell. I have seen the lady several times, and she strikes me as a bright, pleasant little person; neat and trig enough to suit

me, anyhow, Nelly. She is nice with her children, too; I saw them with her one day, and they will make capital playmates for Maria. For after all, my dear, you must remember that it is well for Maria to have plenty of companions. She ought to have some little girl friends."

"Certainly!" said Mrs. Chezzle. "And if Tom would send her to school she might have any number of them. But she has already grown fond of Challey and Bob, and I do not believe she is going to transfer her interest so easily, as Tom and you seem to think, to two little girls who are perfect strangers to her."

Mr. Chezzle only smiled and said pleasantly that 'children had simple ways of settling all such matters and invariably adapted themselves to circumstances.' Which remark made his wife think once more that he was "just like a man."

However, she made a task for herself of attending to her own affairs more exclusively, and took comfort in the thought that her brother wanted her and nobody else to direct the important "finishing touches" to the arrangement of his new dwelling. So she went down from Nipsit one morning on purpose, and was conducted at once to the house by Mr. Chezzle, who met her at the station.

They stopped in front of a moderately large corner house against which a smaller one nestled, with chrysanthemums in full bloom, climbing ivy and grass in the court-yards of both.

"Which is Tom's?" asked Mrs. Chezzle.

"The corner one, of course," said her husband. "How do you suppose the other could hold his magnificence?"

"Then 'the delightful neighbors' live there!" said Mrs. Chezzle, looking up somewhat frigidly at the second-story bay-window of the smaller house. "Where are they? I don't see a sign of the place being occupied."

"Yes, the lady is about somewhere; I caught a glimpse of her," Mr. Chezzle said, smiling. "Perhaps we will see her again presently. But just now I would like your attention to your brother's dwelling, little woman. Come in; here is Antoine holding the door open for you."

The house was certainly very pretty, although far less elegant than the one Mr. Penroy had occupied at Meaux.

"It is as comfortable as can be, and beautiful," Mrs. Chezzle said, after they had gone over every room and had returned to the large front one on the second floor which was des-

tined for Maria. "I had expected Tom to demand more luxury and elegance, though. Only because he is used to them, however, for he certainly cannot need anything finer than this. Perhaps," she added gayly, "his life at Nipsit gave him a taste of something better and more satisfying! And perhaps he gave so much to that Madagascar Mission that — people talk a good deal about its costing more to live here than it does abroad — he may not be able to be so extravagant as he was there. If he did, and, Jack, I never thought of that before, but if he gave away enough to make him feel like going to work and *doing* something, his deed of gift to the 'Mad Mission' would not be money thrown away at all, even if — Where does that go, Jack?" she asked suddenly, pointing to a door in the wall.

"Ah, at last!" said her husband. "I have been waiting for that question, and expected it sooner. Yes, my dear," he said, answering a very puzzled look upon her face, "it *does* lead directly through the wall and into the house of Tom's neighbors! Come, let us see if we can find that little lady anywhere by this time. And don't," he added mischievously, "*don't* begin with a prejudice against those neighbors, Nelly, for I assure you they are very clever

people." As he finished, he led his wife into a room of the adjoining house. But he had to wait a few minutes to allow her to get over her bewilderment; for there were familiar old pieces of furniture from the house in Roxbury, newer pieces from Meaux, and pictures from both places, to make her feel as if she were dreaming.

"Well!" she finally exclaimed, "I don't know whether I am in Europe or America! Tell me which it is, John! Has Tom taken this house too? And are we" —

"Yes, my dear," said her husband. "Your intellect is brightening. We are Tom's tenants, as well as his neighbors. I made one mistake in reference to the latter, however; I should have excepted you when I called them clever, for a more surprisingly dull little woman than you have been all along, Tom and I together never saw!"

"Oh, Jack!" cried his wife, as red as a peony. "I got an idea at the start that 'the lovely children' you talked about were *girls*, and after that how could I guess you meant ourselves? But now the mystery is over, I want to hear all about it. I must see every nook and corner of the house first, and then you must tell me the whole story."

So, in another half hour they were sitting together in a pleasant little room on the parlor floor and the story was told.

"It would all have been much easier," said Mr. Chezzle, "if it had not been for the complication of having both Tom and the Macksbys to manage. Taken separately, the task of managing either was difficult enough, but together! — After going with me once to the Macksbys', Tom and I agreed only upon one small point — that we would not allow you, if we could help it, to set eyes on that place. If the destruction of things had only been greater, it would n't have been so hard to decide what to do — bonfires, or chopping up for kindling, might have settled it. But the Macksbys can't do anything perfectly; they left everything too much injured to keep, and not bad enough to throw away. Tom wanted to empty the house, and besieged me with suggestions of auctions, junk-shops, and dumping-grounds. He thought it would be a capital plan to leave everything on the sidewalk, disappear for a few hours, and send what was left when we returned to a dust-heap! But I put my foot down finally and settled it that he should keep away altogether from the Macksby region, and leave me alone to rescue what I could of our household gods.

Mammy Dolan helped me, and you see the result. Between her and the carpenter a good deal was saved, and Tom was honestly surprised when he saw it collected here. Mammy is considerably cut up at our moving away from her vicinity, but she was delighted at having you spared the sight of the Roxbury house in its present condition and at my sending for her to help get this one in order. She took great pleasure in the comparative grandeur of this as compared with the old one, and beamed with satisfaction when I told her that the Dolan family would still be necessary to our existence. 'We shall not forget our old friends, Mammy, wherever we are,' I said to her; and you should have heard her declare: 'No sir; not the hull Riyal Fam'ly of England could make anny o' the Chizzles do *that!*'"

"And Mammy is right, too," said Mrs. Chezzle, laughing at her husband's account. "I think it will be some time before I get used to the delight of starting housekeeping with everything *clean and whole* — I shall enjoy that more than the beauty. But tell me more about Tom; have you really learned to manage him, Jack? I don't think even *I* could do that!"

"You are his little sister, my dear, but I am an independent American citizen!" Mr. Chez-

zle answered pleasantly. "Tom is a fine fellow and is not going to stand between me and my real wishes. It was a pleasure to see him try to help arrange everything just as you would like it. It was his idea placing this desk here, in just the right light, with those two old ladies over it, as they were in your sitting-room at Meaux, he said."

"Well!" said Mrs. Chezzle, sitting down at the desk and looking up at the engravings of Gerard Dow's "Winder" and "Reader." "I did not know that one 'Mother' was winding the thread of my life so neatly all the while, or that the other was reading half so pretty a fortune for me. It is all beautiful, and I am as happy as ever Tom and you could wish me to be; but — I suppose it is absurd — of course it is — but I can't help feeling sorry" — she laid her cheek down on the slanting lid of the desk and spread her hands upon it as she said, — "sorry that I 'm not to have the chance of showing you and Tom how happy I 'd be in helping you mend up and make the best of things at the old house!"

When her husband leaned over her, tears were really blinding her eyes, although she was laughing up at him, too, in a half-and-half way.

XXII.

THE CHILDREN CANNOT MAKE LITTLE RANNA UNDERSTAND THAT THEY ARE GOING AWAY.

IT was a sore grief at first to Challey and Bob that they were not to be allowed to take their famous boats to Boston. But Captain Pepper made a point of the pleasure and comfort it would be to him in his loneliness, if the little vessels could be loaned to him for the winter.

"And that settles it for *me!*" said Bob, planting himself between the captain's knees. "You can take care of *my* boat, anyhow, and you can sail it all you want to."

"So you can mine too, of course," said Challey, and he afterwards sought an opportunity

to ask the captain privately whether it would be a still further consolation if the name of the "Maria Pepper" were changed to "Zenas Luella," or just plain "Captain Pepper." He was relieved to have the captain stoutly resist any alteration whatever, for he did not quite know how to explain such a change to Maria.

The boys had a great time saying good-by to the captain, a ceremony which they had to repeat all over again every hour or so the day before they left Nipsit, because of new things to say to him which were continually suggesting themselves. Most important among them were consultations about Thanksgiving time when, after a deal of urging from their parents, he had consented to visit them in Boston, which city, in their opinion, was thereby to be honored by the presence of a guest whose distinction was not to be rivalled. They made plans for exhibiting him to their schoolfellows, which were to overwhelm them with honor and excite them to a pitch of enthusiasm beyond anything they had ever experienced.

They were to have a party for the express purpose; all the schoolboys were to be invited, and the captain was to tell stories while the ice-cream and cake were passed around. But *he* was to have some ice-cream too; they would

have a whole pyramid of the best kind for just him and nobody else, and some "*Charlotte-Roosh*" beside, if he wanted it! They wished they could have roast clams instead, though! My! would n't *that* be just too magnificent for anything? To have Captain Pepper make a little clam-bake in the back yard! They could send a barrel of seaweed from Nipsit on purpose, and it would be easy enough to get stones for the oven. That was the best fun for a boys' party that was ever heard of. They would ask Papa and Mamma as soon as they got home to have a clam-bake instead of ice-cream, and they went at once to ask Molly to have the barrel of seaweed go, without fail, with the baggage, that it might be on hand when it was wanted. They would pack it themselves, and she need not have a bit of trouble.

"An' wid St. Michael's blessin' on yez for bein' the conthrivinest byes that ivver was born into the wurreld," said Molly, in dismay. "I 'm thinkin' me throuble 'd come wid the emptyin' of the barr'l, an' not the packin' of it at-all-at-all!" But her ready wit came to her aid, and, after a few minutes' conversation on the subject, she said, brightly: "Whisht now an' I 'll tell yez! Wid the time goin' by befar Thanksgivin' day, the pile o' stuff in the back yard

might be onhandy, an' if yez 'd jist lave arders wid Captain Pepper to bring it along whin he comes himsilf" —

"Hurrah! That 's what we 'll do, sure enough!" cried Bob. "Come on, Challey! Come tell Cap'm Pepper, and maybe he can pack a few eels, and some puff-pigs and" —

But the boys were out of hearing, and Molly heard no more.

"An' if it *was* to come, we could give the unpackin' of it to Miss Mad Lane; I 'd invite her over mesilf for the parpose!" she said to herself, laughing.

There was a strong feeling of rivalry between the French cook and Molly, and it was probably only their inability to understand each other's language which kept the peace between them. Madeleine had no opinion of Nipsit, and was continually going into French ecstasies over the "magnifique château" in which Mr. Penroy had lived in Meaux. Molly, gathering from her tone, expression, and extravagant gestures that the "château" was nothing short of royal in its splendor, went into Irish ecstasies over everything which pertained to the Chezzles, and the result was that neither knew enough of what the other was saying to reply. If Molly had known about the new house in which the

Chezzles were to live, Madeleine would scarcely have had a chance to put in a word sideways.

But Mrs. Chezzle wanted the children to be as much surprised as she had been, and had managed to keep her Nipsit friends in ignorance of the fact that their home had been transferred from Roxbury to Marlborough Street.

Molly had a good many trials during those last few days. The things which Challey and Bob brought to her to pack were not easy to manage. When she was doing her best to make the packages and trunks as few as possible for the express, it was very hard to find places for horseshoes and every sort of beach treasure. She was altogether too fond of her boys to refuse to take what they brought, — that was out of the question, — and, if she had been left with absolute authority, even that barrel of seaweed might have found its way to the new house. As it was, she had one horseshoe and several crab-shells packed away with her best bonnet. And there was Maria, too, bringing birds'-nests and snail-shells of every size and variety. Maria, in her determination to like everything and everybody associated with her cousins, had thrown herself pell-mell into the affections of Molly, who had in consequence be-

come devoted to her. Maria's struggles between the French and English tongues, with her study of "sailore talk" and the occasional creeping into her conversation of a touch of Molly's brogue, appealed to the Irish girl's sympathy. The child had a delicate ear for sound, and picked up everything. In the French tongue she was at home, and expressed herself well; but, as the natural result of her delight in newly found relations, and the new home in which she had been transplanted, it was her ambition to adopt the language which her playmates used, and she was inclined more and more to discontinue the use of French. Her aunt worried somewhat to see her losing what she had acquired so perfectly, and did her best to correct her frequent mistakes, but her efforts were only feebly supported by Mr. Penroy, who was too well satisfied with the more important influences of his daughter's surroundings to care for such a small matter. "School and the proper teachers will set everything straight," he said. "Her *heart* is growing now; and that is of more consequence than her improvement in any language."

But to Molly it was most pathetic to hear Maria struggle to express herself, and "talk all the languages to onct, darlint, the whilst yez

are wid Molly Dolan," she said. "It's the listenin' that's impartant, an' it's the understandin' we need n't be partic'lar about."

So Maria brought Molly her birds'-nests, shells and branches of coral, which were the gifts of Captain Pepper, and what would not go into the trunks, Molly arranged to carry in her hands. When the parcels to be so disposed of met the scornful gaze of Madeleine, it was a little trying perhaps; but Molly had the children on her side and felt amply rewarded for her good-nature by their complete satisfaction, to say nothing of the help which their ready young arms eagerly offered.

The most difficult task which the children had to perform was the parting with little Ranna. She had grown so fond of them all, and of Molly, and now they were going away, and there was no way of telling her of all the good things which were in store for her. They took her their building-blocks as a parting gift, and covered Mrs. Barnes's sitting-room floor with miniature railroads, acted out in pantomime the going away and returning again, built a stage-coach with chairs, did everything they could think of to make the little mute understand, but all to no purpose. She danced about the room in high glee, entered into their

plays with more spirit than any of them, and it was wonderful to see with what quickness she mimicked whatever they did.

The only thing she did not understand was what made them look anxious and troubled every little while. She would go up to Challey or Maria, and look into their faces earnestly to try to find out. But it was of no use.

"We might as well give it up," said Challey at last. "We can't make her understand a single thing that 's *going to* happen!"

So they said good-by, and walked away, looking back repeatedly to wave their hands, as Ranna and her mother stood upon the door-step watching them. Yet they could have told her such a pretty story!

For they knew that Maria's father was going to send for Ranna to go to Boston and make her a visit; and that he was going to find out a beautiful place where she was to be taught, and where her mother could go too, to take care of her. Ranna was to be made all over new, and to learn to be like everybody else!

Mrs. Barnes knew it too, of course; but it was hard, all the same, to have to watch her little girl, for days after the Chezzle boys and Maria left Nipsit, running about everywhere in search of her companions. It was hard to

take her to the house where they had lived and show it to her, all shut up and deserted; to hear her wail her pitiful cries, and be as helpless as anybody to comfort her. It was hard to discover that, for a long time, even the sight of the old toys the children had given her caused nothing but pain to the mute child in her desolation. All she could be made to understand was that her playmates were gone. And for her there was no to-morrow, or by-and-by. Her life was only in each minute as it came and went.

Her playmates had been — now they were no more, and that was why her mother found her, the day after they had left, on the floor of Captain Pepper's shop, where she had sobbed herself to sleep.

XXIII.

MR. PENROY TELLS HIS SISTER ABOUT THE VARIOUS PAPERS WHICH HAD BEEN SIGNED BY HER AND HIS TWO FRENCH PHYSICIANS.

MRS. CHEZZLE wanted the children and Molly to be as much surprised and delighted over the new house as she had been, and arranged everything to bring about that result. Of course they would not notice a hundred or more details which gave her the greatest pleasure. They would not know where scratches had been varnished or polished off of the furniture, how the parlor sofa had been restored from a perfect wreck of injuries, how chairs that had been weak in their joints were stiffened up again, or how curtains had been neatly mended and done up. Molly might notice a good deal of this, and certainly the restorations among the kitchen furniture would not escape her, but the children would only observe what was new, or marked changes in the general disposition of things.

Most women enjoy more seeing old things restored than having them replaced by new ones, and Mrs. Chezzle bestowed many a friendly touch upon the familiar pieces of furniture as she dusted the parlor on the morning when the children arrived.

When she had finished, she sat down and looked about her with keen satisfaction. The children would half believe in fairies, all over again, she thought. Everything looked so fresh and pretty, with the dainty curtains, new carpet and piano, and pictures. She had bunches of chrysanthemums on the piano and in the bay-window, had drawn up the shades so that the sun could shine in; the andirons glittered, and pine knots crackled in the fireplace. She was so glad that it was chilly enough to light the fire, and, as a finishing touch in her preparations, she had a few pieces of precious driftwood to burn by and by, when she would have shown the children all the beauties of their two homes, and they would sit down to watch the wonderful colors come and go.

There was a very pretty color in her own face when the carriage stopped at the door and she hurried to let the party in herself. Here they were, with their queer bundles, all ready for the beautiful surprise!

But Mrs. Chezzle was disappointed. Of the children, Maria was the only one in ecstasies, and it was not at all satisfactory to hear her and Molly exclaiming at everything while Challey and Bob remained silent.

What on earth was the matter? They stood, looking around them for a moment or two, and then, instead of the joy which their mother was watching for, thunder-clouds settled upon their faces as they looked at each other.

"Fred Wellington!" was all Challey said, with a deep sigh.

Bob said "Yes" in a mournful tone, and tried not to let Maria see that his face was puckering. "Have we *got to* live here?" he asked his mother.

"Oh! oh!" cried Maria, dancing about on tiptoe; "ant iss *my* house only there?" pointing to a door of communication which her aunt was showing to them. "Ant I ken come all the days here, chère Tante? Ant iss not all of it bee-yu-teefle n'est-ce pas, mes cousins Shallee et Pob? You are *so* glat — n'est-ce pas?"

"Hm!" said Bob. "You 've been rich so long that you don't mind it! And you never went to Fred Wellington's!"

"No!" said Challey. "I bet you would n't

think it was nice if you knew Fred Wellington!"

"Dear children!" exclaimed their mother, in dismay, sitting down and holding out a hand to each. "What *is* the trouble? And what has Fred Wellington to do with it?"

"Why he 's got enough to do with it!" cried Bob. "I guess you would n't like it, either, if you had to — to only just spend the day there. You have to wipe your feet most off, to begin with; and Fred said he did n't believe his mother would ever invite me to go there again, just because I slid across the dining-room floor! And I don't care if I did. The stairs were awful slippery too, so I 'most fell down and broke both my legs!"

"Oh, but Bob!" struck in Challey, "that was n't the worst part. You know you tipped over your glass of milk at dinner and Fred's mother told you not to put your feet on the rungs of the chairs and you kept forgetting and" —

"Well I don't care!" Bob shouted. "A fellow can't help it if his legs are too short — can he? And there was n't a single place in the whole house for my legs, and I got a hole in the knee of my stocking and Fred's nurse said if *he* had such a hole in *his* stockings they

would n't let him go to the dinner-table. And I would n't have spilled my milk if I had n't been trying to sit with my leg turned the wrong way, so that Mrs. Wellington could n't see the hole! It was real mean, too, when she threw away Fred's stones and his best caterpillar that was going to be a splendid butterfly!"

"Yes!" cried Challey; "and oh, mamma! she threw away the stones because they had barnacles and seaweed on them and smelt bad, and I am awfully afraid Bob's and my horse-shoes that we got on the beach yesterday — great splendid ones, mamma, but they do smell just a little bad, and I 'm afraid you won't want us to keep them in such a nice house as this is, because at Fred Wellington's" —

"Whisht now, an' let the Juke o' Wellington attind to his own concarns!" cried Molly Dolan. "It 's him has n't got a mother made o' the same ma-tarial as is yer own, Challey-bye. An' if it 's going aginst yer falings, Mrs. Chizzle-mum, to have the byes' dead fish an' eyesters anny place else, I might kape them outside the" —

But Mrs. Chezzle did not hear half that Molly said, for she was hugging a boy with each arm and fast changing the expressions of their faces by telling them there should be

places found for all their treasures, and something about a fine play-room in the attic to which she led the way immediately.

Dinner, to which Mr. Penroy and Maria had come also, was over at the Chezzles'. The children had gone up-stairs into the library to put together a toy model of the Brooklyn bridge. Mr. and Mrs. Chezzle and Mr. Penroy had gathered around the large, open fireplace in the front parlor.

"Nelly," said Mr. Penroy, presently, taking a seat near the little work-table where she was busy, "I want your close attention; I want to talk to you about something."

"Yes, Tom," said his sister. Then, as he looked rather grave and did not speak, she asked: "Shall I put away my work? Is it so important as that?"

"It is serious, Nelly," answered her brother. "I believe I am more in earnest than I ever was before in my life, but — go on with your work, please. I can talk better if you do not look at me, perhaps. I am going to talk about you, my dear. Jack knows the drift of what I am going to say, and he has promised not to interrupt. You have disappointed me twice, Nelly; do you know it?"

"Indeed I do not, Tom. How?" she asked, looking up from the little garment she was making.

"And now you are looking at me, when I particularly asked you not to!" he answered, with a pretense of annoyance. "What is that you are at work upon?"

"A night-gown for the Infant Asylum," she said, holding it up a moment before resuming her stitching.

"Very well," he said. "Keep your eyes upon it, — it looks as if it would just fit one of Bob's ninepins, — and don't interrupt me again, or I shall make no sort of progress at all. Yes, you have twice disappointed me. When I first imported you, my child, I looked for a person of less character — who would allow me to — to assume a little more authority over her, in fact. But one day you blazed up so with your Chezzle independence that I was obliged to retreat, against my will — against my will, I wish you to understand! That was my first disappointment. My second was on one evening in Paris, when you refused to obey my orders and would not give me your purse! I have done what I said I would — I have reported you to Jack, madam! But he has disappointed me also; he declines to find fault

with you. He is as unmanageable as you are. Very well! No; it is not very well, it is very bad; but as I cannot make either of you over again, and as I will not be responsible for your sins, I have determined to have recourse to the law! Patience, Mrs. Chezzle! Patience! and keep your eyes on that ninepin garment. I should have settled all this long ago, if you had not disappointed me in the ways I have described. But the mischief of it is in the quiet way by which you have turned what was the simplest sum in my arithmetic into the most difficult problem.

"Here is the plain English of it: After years of an indifference which was unutterably stupid, I had worked myself up into a state of semi-demi-interest in a foreign mission upon which I was about to bestow considerable property, when my lawyer, Duvergne, convinced me that it was all a grand humbug. Naturally, I wished to get rid of my deed of gift, and would like to have palmed it off upon my sister. She, in her turn, showed me that she liked her Jack's interminable letters better than my old legal documents, and did not exactly decline to touch it, but — what was as bad, or worse — made me afraid to offer it to her. Now she brings me to America and shows me a pair of middies

whose future looks so well for their characters that I don't like to interfere with it seriously. There you are, Nelly! You see what a scrape you have got me into. Now I expect you to get me out of it, and, as I informed you, I have had recourse to the law. Do you understand?"

"Not a syllable!" Mrs. Chezzle answered, dropping her hands and her work into her lap. "What can the law do to Jack or me? And, if you knew that the Madagascar Mission was a humbug, why did you give it anything? Did not the doctors and I sign a deed of gift to it that morning?"

"Not exactly," said Mr. Penroy.

"What did we sign, then?" she asked, very much puzzled. "Jack understands, or he would not look so much amused."

"Oh, the doctors signed a deed of gift — a straightforward, honest, bona fide gift," said her brother, laughing. "I had invited them to witness one, and I did not disappoint them in *that*. There was a little change in the order of it, however, which they failed to observe, that was all." And he and his brother-in-law seemed to be enjoying something very much.

"Do tell me all about it, Tom," said Mrs. Chezzle. "Since Jack and you are so enter-

tained by it, let me have a little of the fun too, please."

"Well, Nelly," said her brother, "they signed a deed which disposed of some twenty thousand dollars, but from which neither the Madagascar Mission nor the eminent physicians Messieurs De la Quille and Frédiqueue will derive any benefit. You see, my dear, I felt myself entitled to a little entertainment out of them, for they had certainly had their share out of me. And I am quite satisfied, I assure you. The recollection of those two rogues going away that morning in such good spirits, thinking that they had made their fortunes out of me, is very satisfactory, I assure you. When they reached home they found a letter from Duvergne explaining the situation to them. He thought I missed the best part of the play by not having the dénoûment in the library, after they had witnessed my deed. But I had had enough of them and was quite willing to let the curtain drop where it did. They are fine actors — all four of those men, Nelly. We paid a rather high price for the entertainment, but it was worth something."

"When did you lose sight of the missionaries, Tom?" asked his sister.

"I did not have to do that at all — Du-

vergne lost them," Mr. Penroy answered. "He did it pretty effectually too. We thought that even Frédiqueue and De la Quille did not know where they were when we came away. The lawyers had discovered their whole scheme to be a fraud, and might have had all four men arrested. Roubaix and Duvergne both thought I ought to allow them to do it, have the thing exposed, and the men convicted as swindlers. But it would have altered my plans so entirely, postponing considerably my coming here, to say nothing of the disagreeable publicity and a thousand other annoyances, that I would not consent. It would have pleased me to prevent the doctors from practising medicine any more. I would like the satisfaction of knowing that I was their last patient. But they will certainly set up their next office a good way from the offices of Messrs. Roubaix and Duvergne."

"Oh, they 'll get up a new comedy altogether," said Mr. Chezzle, throwing a bit of driftwood on the fire. "Their genius does not stop with either medicine or missionary work. It will not be easy for them to find another patient like Mr. Thomas Penroy, and they will abandon the medical profession."

"Tom," said Mrs. Chezzle, leaving her work

to sit down by her husband on the cosy little sofa on one side of the fireplace, "what did *I* sign that morning? Was it anything to do with the mission?"

"So," he exclaimed, "Mrs. Chezzle's curiosity is roused at last, is it? Well, it shall be satisfied. No, my dear; your paper had nothing to do with the *Mad* Mission, although it concerned missionary work perhaps. It gave you a mission of your own, and I expect you to fulfill it. To tell you the truth, little sister, it was not exactly a legal paper at all. As long as I believed in that Madagascar scheme I meant to ask you to be one of the witnesses of my deed; but when my purpose changed, the character of the deed made your signature a little unnecessary — rather out of place, in fact. So" — Mr. Penroy went behind the sofa where his sister was sitting, and leaned over her with a very pleasant expression upon his face, as he continued — "so — to avoid mystifying you, I had to get up something for you to sign, you see. You need n't be worried; it was not a legal document, and you may burn it, if you like. It was only a little agreement between you and me, which your Jack here quite approves of — an agreement to help your

old brother practise some of the disinterestedness you have in such abundance; to stand by him and aid him, by carrying out the purpose of the deed those villains signed, as well as you can. For in that deed — this is what I meant by having recourse to the law — I placed the sum I had intended for the Mad Mission at the disposal of Ellen Chezzle, for the establishment here of some kind of institution which will make the world better off. So, there it is, Nelly," dropping a paper into her lap, "and it is for you to say whether we will set up a new public library, or a Home for mute children like Maria's little friend, or — what do you say to a new home for your 'Ninepin Babies'? Are n't the 'Ninepin Babies' better objects of charity than the Madagascar savages? Well, well!" he cried, taking her head tenderly between his hands and rubbing her hair all the wrong way as he stooped low enough to kiss her forehead, "I have hit upon a new discovery! I believe your 'Ninepin Babies' are almost as becoming to you, little woman, as your husband and children are!"

She had clasped her husband's arm and was beginning to exclaim, "O Jack! Jack!" as if it was all *his* doing, when there was a

noise of young feet overhead and the children came scampering down-stairs, Challey carrying the Brooklyn bridge under one arm.

"Just in time to bring you to, Nelly!" said her brother, leaving her and going to meet the children. "Come along, middies, and let us see how it works."

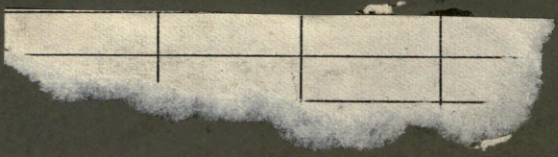
"It is the most splendid thing you ever saw, Uncle Tom, and it goes up as easy as nothing!" cried Challey, dumping the box on the floor and tumbling the bridge out in pieces. "See how fast we can do it!"

He and Maria set to work putting the blocks in the proper order, while Bob hitched together a tiny train of cars and scattered a medley of little boats on the carpet.

"You pull this string, you see, and the cars go over the top. And one fellow stays over there and another has to be here!" screamed Bob, while Challey was explaining another part of the toy. Maria, down on her knees, was pulling miniature boats along under the bridge and watched her opportunity, when the boys' voices lulled, to exclaim:

"See! Violá chère Tante et mon Oncle Tchonn, et mon Papa! Effery think is h-h-high-tide-sailing affore the wint!"

But her aunt did not hear her because her eyes were looking at vacancy, — just as they were looking at the beginning of this story, — and she was smiling to herself, with her mind busy among the " Ninepin Babies."



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